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**Tesi doctoral**

*Quality Model  
for Social Collaborative  
Companies*

Pierina Moreno Chacón

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# Quality Model for Social Collaborative Companies

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A mi padre Alberto, quien me transmitió la fe, el amor al conocimiento y el valor de la profesionalidad. Cada día recuerdo tus palabras, tu voz y tu sonrisa. Ahora vamos a ser colegas y sé que estas sonriendo desde el cielo.

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## Contents

1. Chapter 1. Thesis introduction.....	10
1.1 Context, relevance, and motivation. What does this thesis study and why it is important?.....	10
1.2 Thesis objectives and structure .....	12
1.2.1 General objective: .....	12
1.2.2 Specific objectives: .....	13
1.2.3 Research strategy and thesis structure .....	14
1.3 Dissemination strategy .....	17
1.4 Concluding remarks.....	18
2. Chapter 2. Study 1: On the Convergence of Collaborative and Social Economy: A Quality Model for the Combined Effects .....	20
2.1 Introduction.....	22
2.2. Convergence of the Collaborative Economy and the Social Economy .....	23
2.2.1 Collaborative economy .....	24
2.2.2 Social economy.....	24
2.2.3 Meeting points.....	25
2.3. A Social Collaborative Company Definition .....	26
2.4 Quality in Social Collaborative Companies: A Literature Review.....	28
2.4.1. Quality Models in Social Activities .....	29
2.4.2. Quality Service Model .....	29
2.4.3. Quality and Excellence Model of European Foundation Quality Management (EFQM).....	30
2.4.4. Business Models in Collaborative Economy .....	30
2.4.5. Some Considerations about the Platform and Governance.....	32
2.5 Quality Management Model for Social Collaborative Companies (SCCs): A Proposal.....	33
2.5.1. Management.....	37
2.5.1.1. Strategy.....	38
2.5.1.2. Leadership.....	38
2.5.1.3. Social Management.....	39
2.5.2. Operations .....	40
2.5.2.1. Provider of Products and/or Service.....	41
2.5.2.2. Customers .....	42
2.5.2.3. Platform.....	42
2.5.3. Continuous Improvement.....	44
2.6 Conclusions.....	47

3. Chapter 3. Study 2: Quality Management Model for Social Collaborative Companies with a validation based in Gioia methodology.....	50
3.1. Introduction.....	52
3.2. Context background and theoretical underpinnings.....	53
3.3. Methodology.....	54
3.3.1. Sample selection.....	55
3.3.2. Conducting interviews.....	56
3.3.3. Data analysis.....	58
3.4. Quality Model for Social Collaborative Companies (SCC) update.....	64
3.5. Conclusions.....	67
4. Chapter 4. Study 3: Quality Management Model for Social Collaborative Companies application. Case studio to a social Electrical Car Sharing company.....	71
4.1. Introduction.....	73
4.2. Literature review.....	74
4.3. Methodology.....	78
4.4. Application of the Quality Model to Som Mobilitat.....	89
4.5. Conclusions.....	98
5. Chapter 5. Thesis conclusions.....	101
5.1. Main findings of this dissertation.....	101
5.2. Thesis conclusions and main contributions.....	107
5.2.1 Chapter 2 conclusions and main contributions.....	107
5.2.2 Chapter 3 summary, conclusions, and main contributions.....	110
5.2.3 Chapter 4 summary, conclusions and main contributions.....	111
6. References.....	114
7. Appendix.....	125
Appendix I. Questionnaire from empirical validation of this article: On the convergence of Collaborative and Social Economy: A Quality Model for the combined effects.....	125
Appendix II. Decision letter Study 2.....	126
Appendix III. Questionnaire for the semi-structured interviews.....	128
Appendix IV. Questionnaire results.....	131
Appendix V. Quality Model for Social Collaborative Companies (SCC) after validation.....	132
Appendix VI. Confirming submission. Study 3.....	140

## List of tables

Table 1. Thesis structure .....	16
Table 2. Comparison between social economy companies and collaborative companies.....	26
Table 3. Characteristics of social collaborative companies (SCCs) .....	27
Table 4. Aspects to Consider for the Quality Model for Social Collaborative Companies. ....	34
Table 5. Relationship between business and quality models considered and the dimensions of the quality model for social collaborative companies.....	36
Table 6. Demographic information of respondents.....	57
Table 7. Findings for the Quality Management Model for SCC by aggregate dimensions.....	65
Table 8. SCCs evaluation questionnaire .....	81
Table 9. Gaps identified in the Quality Model for SCC assessment.....	93
Table 10. Initial objectives and how they have been responded. ....	103

## List of figures

Figure 1. Research strategy .....	14
Figure 2. Dimensions of the quality model for social collaborative companies .....	36
Figure 3. Subcategories in management dimension .....	37
Figure 4. Subcategories in operations dimension .....	40
Figure 5. Subcategories in continuous improvement dimension. ....	45
Figure 6. Quality management model for social collaborative companies.....	45
Figure 7. Data Structure (Gioia Methodology) of the Quality Model for SCC Management Dimension.....	59
Figure 8. Data structure (Gioia Methodology) of the Quality Model for SCC, Operations Dimension.....	61
Figure 9. Data structure (Gioia Methodology) of the Quality Model for SCC, Continuous Improvement Dimension .....	63
Figure 10. Methodology to implement the Quality Management Model for SCCs .....	79
Figure 11. Adherence to the key criteria of the Quality Model for SCCs. Som Mobilitat results .....	92

## Abstract

This doctoral thesis presents a distinctive intersection between the collaborative economy and the social economy. Through research developed in several articles, this study contributes to the conceptualization, validation and practical implementation of a Quality Model designed specifically for Social Collaborative Enterprises (SCCs).

The research begins with a review of the literature to postulate a definition of SCCs as entities committed to a social mission that provide goods and services through platform-based operations. Subsequently, the design of a Quality Model for the SCCs is presented, divided into three main dimensions: Management, Operations and Continuous Improvement, with the purpose of guiding the SCCs towards operational excellence.

In a second article, the validation of the Quality Model is carried out using the Gioia Methodology. To this end, a questionnaire is designed for semi-structured interviews with two samples of experts (academics and practitioners), which are then organized into first-order, second-order and aggregate dimensions, providing empirical evidence of the effectiveness and relevance of the model in the context of the SCCs. Expert knowledge contributes to the refinement of the model, ensuring its practical usefulness in the real world.

Subsequently, the third article presents a methodology with a descriptive explanatory approach for the implementation of the validated Quality Model for Collaborative Social Enterprises (SCC). The methodology includes five steps: identification, preparation, evaluation, action plan and implementation of SCC. This methodology was applied in a case study conducted at Som Mobilitat, a company based in Barcelona, Spain. As a result, an action plan was generated that focuses on developing a comprehensive plan to address the gaps or areas of improvement identified. However, the implementation of these proposed actions, based on the identified gaps, are outside the scope of this academic research due to their implications for the company's strategy, resources, schedules and internal functioning.

While this research makes substantial contributions, it also recognizes limitations. The small sample size of experts involved in the validation process may affect the



generalization of the model. Future research opportunities include expanding and refining the SCC concept through quantitative validation, broader expert engagement, and evaluations of real-world applications. Exploring the applicability of the model to various social enterprises and conducting long-term follow-ups can reveal sector-specific insights and strategies for sustainable development.

Furthermore, this research opens avenues to explore platform cooperatives within the collaborative economy, particularly in shared mobility sectors. Continued research in this domain can further refine the concept of SCC and uncover strategies to promote social well-being while ensuring economic sustainability, contributing to the continued evolution of responsible business practices within the contemporary economic landscape.

In summary, this dissertation provides a comprehensive framework for understanding and promoting SCCs, offering practical tools for operational excellence, and stimulating further research in the evolving field of collaborative social enterprises.

## Chapter 1

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# **Thesis introduction**

## **1. Chapter 1. Thesis introduction**

### **1.1 Context, relevance, and motivation. What does this thesis study and why it is important?**

In recent years, the landscape of business and organizational models has witnessed a significant shift towards socially oriented enterprises for legal reasons and by their own conviction (Kuada & Hinson, 2012; Parahina et al., 2014; Gali et al., 2020). These enterprises, prioritize not only economic success but also social and environmental impact (Cheah, et al., 2019). This emerging paradigm seeks to balance profit generation with fostering positive contributions to society. In this reality there also for collaborative or platform companies which notable business grown, in fact according to (Leinonen, 2020) five of the six biggest companies in the world are platform companies.

Nevertheless, this phenomenon that generate big amount of money in last years, can be eclipsed by some aspects inherent to the collaborative economy, for example: unequal distribution of generated wealth precarious labor conditions (Sundararajan, 2017), poor work conditions such as: control over workers without employing them (Scholz, 2016; Bunders et al., 2022), legal and taxation gaps and in general risk of discrimination (Schor, 2021).

Given this stark reality, it becomes imperative to ascertain whether highly successful enterprises can sustain their operations without reconfiguring their business paradigms to embrace more socially oriented viewpoints harmonizing user interests and the broader welfare through the application of principles grounded in solidarity and responsibility, (Wilhelms et al., 2017). In essence, it is important to investigate whether a convergence between social enterprises and collaboratives companies is achievable, resulting in an amalgamation that leverages the strengths of both (Kassan & Orsi, 2012). Moreover, the inquiry expands to determine whether this amalgamated collaborative-social approach can nurture the development of exceptional products and services, thus facilitating the sustenance of a viable positions in the long run.

Hence, to get this sustainable performance for social oriented and collaborative companies, it was considered important to provide to a specific definition for these types on enterprises to deepen their analysis, and after that to raise the ensuing queries: How can standards be implemented within the realm of Social Collaborative Companies (onwards SCCs)? How can the evaluation of a product's or service's quality within an SCC be quantified? What ramifications does the platform have on customer contentment? Which could be answered with the proposal of a Quality Management Model specifically designed for this type of companies.

In the context of this research, it is necessary to take into account that the quality of social oriented and collaboratives companies depends simultaneously on both: the platform and the specific providers offering the services (Ert et al., 2016; Cheng, 2016) as it is this provider who directly interacts with the customer and eventually serves them in the "real" world, and on the other hand there is limited availability of research on how to manage and measure the quality of products and services in collaboratives companies and even less so in the case of social oriented (Cheah et al., 2019; Toni et al., 2018).

This study holds importance for several reasons:

- Provide a concept that makes it possible to give visibility to companies with a social orientation and that operate with a platform so that they can be recognized, and also, so that they can be studied.
- The development of a dedicated Quality Model will bridge a gap, equipping to this companies with a method to measure their endeavors' holistic impact.
- A robust Quality Model will facilitate improved transparency, allowing to this companies to quantify their contributions and demonstrate their dedication to responsible business practices.
- These companies navigate complex terrain where decisions must balance financial viability with societal and environmental welfare. The Quality Model can serve as a decision-making tool, providing with quantifiable insights into how different strategies and initiatives align with their overarching mission.

- Encouraging Continuous Improvement: As with any business model, these companies must strive for continuous improvement. The Quality Model can identify areas where enhancements are needed, enabling to refine their operations for greater efficiency, collaboration, and impact.
- This study adds to the body of academic research by addressing a novel area of inquiry: the development of a Quality Model for social oriented companies and collaboratives companies. By doing so, it enriches discussions about the evolving landscape of business models and the integration of social and environmental considerations into organizational evaluations.
- Ultimately, the Quality Model has the potential to not only serve SCCs but also inspire a broader shift in how businesses are conceptualized and evaluated. By showcasing the viability and importance of incorporating social and collaborative values into the heart of business operations, this research could foster a culture of responsible and impactful entrepreneurship.

In essence, this thesis endeavors to contribute a practical and scholarly foundation that supports the evolution of social and collaborative Companies. By addressing the contextual nuances and motivations behind the study, this research embarks on a journey towards promoting a more sustainable, ethical, and socially conscious approach to business in the modern world.

## **1.2 Thesis objectives and structure**

As explained above, there are some gaps to address in this research, so this thesis embarks on an exploration in the field of SCCs with the general objective of improving their understanding and facilitating their development. To this end, the research is driven by a set of coherent objectives that collectively address the nuanced dimensions of SCCs and their quality management, as presented below.

### *1.2.1 General objective:*

The primary aim of this thesis is to develop and implement an encompassing Quality Model intended for application in SCCs. This model is crafted to transcend

company-specific boundaries, offering a structured mechanism to objectively evaluate the quality of products and/or services. Consequently, this model not only serves as a management instrument but also as a catalyst for continual refinement within these companies.

### 1.2.2 *Specific objectives:*

- I. *Formulate a Comprehensive Definition for SCCs:* Through an in-depth review of existing literature, establish a refined and encompassing definition that encapsulates the distinctive characteristics and essence of SCCs.
- II. *Develop a Quality Model tailored for SCCs:* Build upon insights garnered from a comprehensive literature review to devise a Quality Model exclusively designed for Social Collaborative Companies. This model will encompass multifaceted dimensions of quality to holistically evaluate the products and/or services offered by SCCs.
- III. *Validation of the Proposed Quality Model Using the Gioia Methodology:* Employ the Gioia methodology to rigorously validate the proposed Quality Model. This entails scrutinizing the model's theoretical foundation, its alignment with SCCs principles, and its applicability in real-world scenarios, thereby ensuring its reliability and effectiveness.
- IV. *Application of the Quality Model in a real-world Context:* Apply the developed Quality Model to a selected company operating within the realm of SCCs as a comprehensive case study. This practical application will offer insights into the model's practicality, usability, and capacity to gauge the quality of the company's offerings.

By achieving these specific objectives, this thesis endeavors to contribute to the academic and practical discourse surrounding SCCs, their quality evaluation, and the enhancement of their operational practices through a rigorously developed and validated Quality Model.

### 1.2.3 Research strategy and thesis structure

The strategy proposed in this research is to begin by defining SCC through a review of the literature, with the objective of obtaining a deep understanding of its unique characteristics (objective I), then with this fundamental knowledge, we delve deeper into the center of the research: the creation of the Quality Model for SCC, also proposed based on an exhaustive review of the literature (objective II). Objective I and II will be accomplished in Study 1.

Subsequently, to ensure the robustness and relevance of the model, its validation through Grounded Theory is proposed. As a result of this, information can be found that can lead to changes in the model, to improve its conceptual approach, understanding and possible applications (objective III). Objective III will be accomplished in Study 2.

Finally, it is necessary to define the criteria for the objective identification of the SCCs, the approach of an implementation methodology and the practical implementation of the Quality Model in a case study in a real SCC (objective IV), which will be accomplished in Study III. This sequence is presented in figure 1.

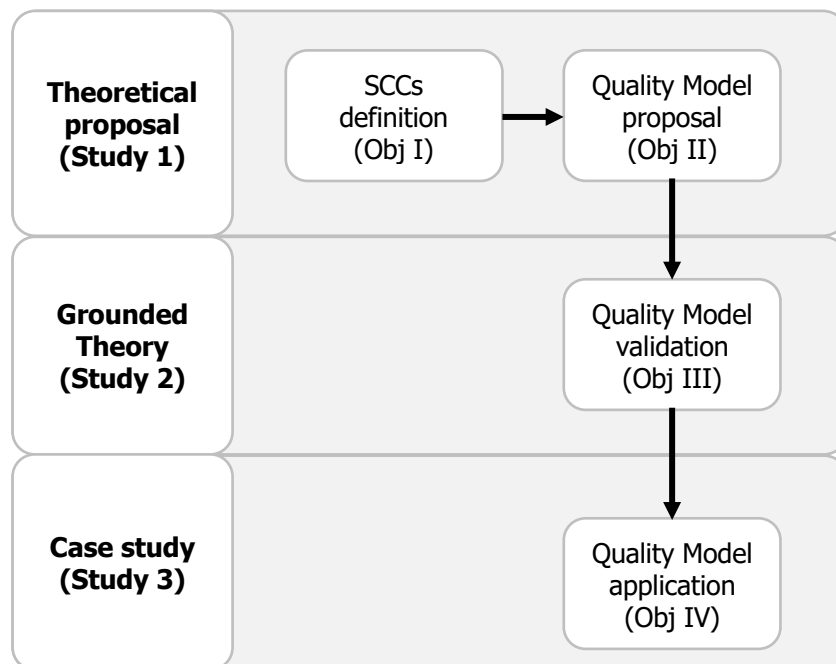


Figure 1. Research strategy

The ensuing chapters are structured to unfold this research in a logical sequence to accomplish the research objectives, encompassing the conceptualization of SCCs, the formulation of a bespoke Quality Management Model, its validation, and its practical application. Each chapter, delineated by its distinct focus and methodology, contributes synergistically to the overarching goal of advancing the definition around SCCs and their quality management (Table 1).



**Table 1.** Thesis structure

Objective	Chapter	Description
I and II	Chapter 2. Study 1  Social Collaborative Companies definition and Quality Management Model for Social Collaborative Companies proposal based in a literature review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>SCC conceptualization:</b> To explore the antecedents of publications related with collaborative companies and social companies to search differences and similitudes to find a framework to recognize this kind of companies.</li> <li>• <b>Quality Model for SCCs proposal:</b> Identification of key theoretical frameworks and the most pertinent literature, culminating in the composition of a state-of-the-art overview and the preliminary Quality Management Model tailored for SCCs</li> </ul>
III	Chapter 3. Study 2  Quality Management Model for SCCs validation based in Gioia methodology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying the key aspects of the Quality Model for SCCs, through a declarative description within a questionnaire administered to an expert group.</li> <li>• Analyzing the data gathered from the questionnaire using a grounded theory approach through Gioia methodology.</li> <li>• Assimilating the insights garnered during the validation process into the theoretical Quality Management Model for SCCs thereby enhancing and refining it toward the creation of a definitive version.</li> </ul>
IV	Chapter 4. Study 3  Quality Management Model for SCCs application. Case studio to a social Electrical Car Sharing company.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish criteria for the identification of SCCs in alignment with the definition outlined in this research.</li> <li>• Formulate a comprehensive methodology for the seamless implementation of the quality management model within SCCs. This approach will pragmatically guide SCCs in fulfilling their social objectives while effectively addressing stakeholders' expectations. It will facilitate the integration of the model into operational strategies and cultivate an environment of continual improvement by furnishing a framework for quality monitoring and evaluation.</li> <li>• Apply the Quality Management Model for SCCs to a social Electrical Car Sharing company located in Barcelona, Spain. This application aims to assess the repercussions of integrating the quality management model on the company's holistic performance.</li> </ul>

### 1.3 Dissemination strategy

The outputs of this thesis have been presented, submitted and/or published in these editions the full list of which is presented below:

- **Academic conferences:**

Moreno, P. (2020). A Quality Model for Social Collaboratives Companies. 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Quality Engineering and Management. September 21-22, 2020. University of Minho, Portugal.

- **Peer-reviewed publications:**

**1. Moreno, P., Selvam, R. M., & Marimon, F. (2021). On the convergence of collaborative and social economy: a quality model for the combined effects. *Sustainability*, 13(4), 1–20.**

- CiteScore 2022: 5.8
- SJR 2022: 0.664
- SNIP 2022: 1.198
- Impact score: 4.39
- h-index: 136
- Overall Rank / Ranking: 7613
- Category: Management, Monitoring, Policy, and Law = Q2
- Category: Geography, Planning, and Development = Q1 (best quartile)

**2. Moreno, P., Selvam, R. M., Marimon, F., 2023. A Quality Model for Social Collaborative Companies with a Validation based on Gioia Methodology. *International Journal for Quality Research*, 18(2).**

- CiteScore 2021: 2.5
- SJR 2022: 0.296
- Impact score: 1.49
- h-index: 24

- Overall Rank / Ranking: 15256
  - Category: Safety, Risk, Reliability and Quality= Q3 (best quartile)
- 
- **Peer-reviewed publications (under review):**

**3. Moreno, P., Selvam, R. M., Marimon, F., 2023. Quality Model for Social Collaborative Companies: Implementation methodology using the case of carsharing company. Long Range Planning.**

- CiteScore 2022: 12.2
- SJR 2022: 2.852
- Impact score: 8.39
- h-index: 118
- Overall Rank / Ranking: 690
- Category: Strategy and Management = Q1 (best quartile)

#### **1.4 Concluding remarks.**

This thesis is a testament to the critical importance and academic relevance of SCCs in the modern business landscape. The exploration carried out in this research underscores the importance of understanding the intricate interplay between collaborative entrepreneurship, social responsibility, and quality management.

The objectives outlined in this study have been derived from an exhaustive review of the literature, thus laying the foundations for the research carried out. Through a judicious integration of qualitative methodologies such as expert assessments and grounded theory, along with other tools including questionnaires and the Gioia methodology, this thesis has uncovered potential insights and avenues for academic discourse. By addressing both theoretical foundations and practical applications, this research aims to contribute substantially to the continuous evolution of SCCs and their evolution in terms of quality management.

## Chapter 2. Study 1\*

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# **On the Convergence of Collaborative and Social Economy: A Quality Model for the Combined Effects**

**\* Publication Reference:**

Moreno Chacón, P., Selvam, R. M., & Marimon, F. (2021). On the Convergence of Collaborative and Social Economy: A Quality Model for the Combined Effects. *Sustainability*, 13(4), 1907.

## **2. Chapter 2. Study 1: On the Convergence of Collaborative and Social Economy: A Quality Model for the Combined Effects**

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- h-index: 136
- Overall Rank / Ranking: 7613
- Category: Management, Monitoring, Policy, and Law = Q2
- Category: Geography, Planning, and Development = Q1 (best quartile)

### **Contribution to the article:**

As the main researcher, I have been responsible for the review of the literature, the design, the obtaining of the data, the processing of the information and the writing of the text. My supervisors, Frederic Marimon and Rejina Selvam have participated in the article in its approach, supervision, and review.

**Abstract:**

This article has two aims: the first is to propose a definition for social collaborative companies that encompasses their main characteristics, and once the companies to which we refer is settled, the second aim is to propose a quality model for social collaborative companies. These companies are of a particular type based on a collaborative business model and with a social focus as part of their mission. They employ a democratic style of governance, whether or not they are cooperatives, and operate through a platform in the collaborative environment. The quality model has three main categories: management, operations, and continuous improvement in a cyclical manner to ensure continuous improvement. The findings may be interesting for academics due to the fact that it is the first attempt to provide a quality model for these social collaborative companies and provide a conceptual framework for these organizations. Additionally, some managerial implications can be evident, such as when (i) the framework functions as a management guide for excellence, (ii) a tool for benchmarking, and (iii) a tool for internal and external communication.

**Keywords:** *collaborative economy; collaborative consumption; platform economy; sharing economy; social economy; quality*

## 2.1 Introduction

There are many definitions of collaborative economy or collaborative consumption (Hamari et al., 2016). For this research, collaborative economy is a business model in which activities are facilitated through collaborative platforms that create a market for the temporary use of goods or services often offered by individuals or a mediator (Ert et al., 2016). It includes all those models of economic exchange in which there is communication between equals, either between organizations or individuals, with or without economic consideration (McIntyre et al., 2021). Now, for an activity to be considered as collaborative economy, it requires the interaction of three actors: (a) a platform provider who allows the exchange, (b) a service provider, and (c) a client who seeks access to assets and consumes (Barnes & Mattsson, 2016; Benoit et al., 2017).

The growth of sharing models is also having an increasingly relevant impact on the revenues captured by traditional companies, and it is as an alternative to the traditional economy because of advantages such as cost reductions obtained by customers or users through the services of the collaborative economy companies (Benoit et al., 2017) due to increments in efficiency through better access and use of resources (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018), their great scalability potential (Botsman & Rogers, 2010), and also the client's willingness to socialize with service providers (among peers) or with other users who share the platform (Ozanne & Ozanne, 2011); (Alzamora-Ruiz et al., 2020). Another advantage is that the consumer is given the opportunity to enjoy a particular good without having to buy it (Belk, 2014); (Botsman & Rogers, 2010); (Baden et al., 2020), which implies less risk and responsibility (Barnes & Mattsson, 2016).

However, all these benefits are overshadowed by certain aspects of the collaborative economy, such as the lack of distribution of wealth among those who produce it, precarious working conditions (Sundararajan, 2017), legal and tax loopholes, poor working conditions, etc. (Scholz, 2016). In light of this reality, it is necessary to know if the more successful companies can actually continue their operations without reformulating their business models towards more social perspectives (Botsman & Rogers, 2010) by conjoining both the interests of users and the general interest with the application of the principles of solidarity and responsibility (Wilhelms et al., 2017); that is, whether it is possible for social companies and collaborative companies to converge

in a company that has the best of both sides (Kassan & Orsi, 2012) and whether this collaborative–social perspective can allow for the development of quality products and services, which permit a sustainable position to be maintained over time.

About the social economy, the main definition considered for this research is “a group of organizations that do not belong to the public sector, have a democratic governance with equal rights and obligations of its members, and practice a particular regime of ownership and distribution of benefits, using surpluses to expand the entity and improve the services provided to its partners and society. These companies can be in these families: cooperatives, mutual, associations, and foundations” (Diaz-Foncea et al., 2016). One approach to the collaborative economy and the social economy is proposed in platform cooperativism (Scholz, 2016), but there are other collaborative companies that take the form of a social economy without being a cooperative. Perhaps then we can discover a new type of company? But how are these companies? Can a collaborative company be social? Can a collaborative company only be social if it is a cooperative? Can a social and collaborative company compete with other companies in a global market? What must workers/partners do in terms of governance to ensure long-term sustainability? How can this kind of company compete in a collaborative environment with quality products and services?

To answer these kinds of questions, in the present chapter will be perform a literature review to get to know collaborative and social companies, to propose a new concept for a social collaborative company, to understand how this type of company considers these two realities, and finally to propose a quality management model for the social collaborative companies, to offer guidance to help to be more sustainable by delivering quality products and services.

## **2.2. Convergence of the Collaborative Economy and the Social Economy**

It is necessary to compare the collaborative economy and the social economy and observe how they can complement each other and where they can be found. Below is a summary of the most relevant concepts found for this research.



### *2.2.1 Collaborative economy*

Starting with the collaborative economy, it has positive expectations beyond financial aspects, such as efficiency derived from the use of underutilized resources as a potential solution to income inequality (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018), the possibility of citizens becoming small-scale economic agents capable of generating and exchanging value with other citizens directly (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018); (Scholz, 2016), greater availability of and more qualified workers, more personal connections between users (Newlands, 2016), and many sectors that can take advantage of this new business model (Botsman & Rogers, 2010).

However, not all is good in a collaborative economy; there are some grey aspects such as concentrated investments, the existence of dominant players in some sectors (Scholz, 2016), and the value generated not always being shared with the users who helped create it (Scholz, 2016), (reducing marginal costs, investing, growing fast, selling, and moving forward (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018), and lack of clarity regarding where taxes must be paid). In some cases, activity is not regulated by law (Stemler, 2017), worker's rights could be threatened (Morell, 2011), and one wonders what would happen if massive information is captured on multiple platforms (Stemler, 2017).

### *2.2.2 Social economy*

Social economy refers to the economic activities of a society seeking economic democracy associated with social utility (Falcón-Pérez & Fuentes-Perdomo, 2019). In this context, social enterprises are aimed at the social benefit of the community or its partners, and this mission is at the center of the management (Gorenflo, 2015), for whom profit is often secondary. They have management autonomy with respect to public powers, and the decision-making process is democratic (one person one vote). Adherence is voluntary, and there are equal rights and obligations among the partners (Kassan & Orsi, 2012). There is a particular regime of ownership and distribution of benefits, with surpluses being used to expand the entity and improve the services provided to its members and the community in general (Spieth et al., 2019). The organization emphasizes restrictions on the

private appropriation of results and on the constitution of collective patrimony (Gorenflo, 2015); (Kassan & Orsi, 2012).

### *2.2.3 Meeting points*

There seems to be a meeting point between the social economy and the collaborative economy in platform cooperativism (Scholz, 2016). In this is found a participatory decision-making that distances the power of decisions from investors and benefits favoring a collective heritage (Gansky, 2014), all this is combined in the execution towards a platform (Conaty & Bollier, 2014). There are also collaborative companies that, without being explicitly cooperative, fit within the principles of the social economy (Gorenflo, 2015). This type of company attempts to have its activity benefit many and not a few (Bauwens, 2014), reducing inequalities and contributing to the distribution of benefits to society (Stokes et al., 2014).

This approach includes the collective and community aspect (Richardson, 2015) as well as the need for trust and participation to carry out the activity and extends the scope of the collaborative economy beyond information and communication technologies, including exchanges and collaboration in the local environment (Newlands, 2016). It is also oriented towards reformulating concepts such as innovation and efficiency to develop mechanisms that allow for putting the person and their community at the center of the activity (Scholz, 2016).

Companies that are collaborative and social need bear in mind that, from the collaborative point of view, it is necessary to make visible the positive consequences that they generate and make social sense of the activity that they carry out (Gorenflo, 2015), and from the social side, must be able to face the difficulties related to the participative style of governance and not neglect the efficiency and sustainability of the organization (Conaty & Bollier, 2014) in addition to the achievement of social goals (Sundararajan, 2017). The Table 2 presents a comparison between social and collaborative companies with respect to two aspects:

**Table 2.** Comparison between social economy companies and collaborative companies

Aspects	Social Economy Companies	Collaborative Economy Companies
The social and governance spheres	They have a participatory decision-making process (away from the decision-making power of those agents who act as investors in the organization and establish limitations in the distribution of benefits in order to favors a collective patrimony, an aspect that also affects the organizational governance).	Do not have it as a norm to establish the democratic decision-making process, nor do they have limitations in the distribution of benefits. Their activity is focused on or mainly defined by the use of existing resources through the previous use of these resources and their use in the facilities offered by certain platforms (internet) to facilitate the exchange of these resources.
The conditions for acquiring a transformative or positive character	The pursuit of the general interest and the well-being of people and the community are explicit.	These companies may have this orientation towards general well-being by serving a greater number of consumers than the traditional economy (facilitated by its high degree of scalability) as well as by the resolution of social needs at a lower cost. However, these elements may not be part of a company's mission but are the collateral result of the activity of the organization.

### 2.3. A Social Collaborative Company Definition

After reviewing the characteristics of both economies and considering the common and different points found in the literature review, such as social companies belonging to the private sector (Zale, 2016), considering the primacy of the person and the corporate purpose over capital (Kassan & Orsi, 2012), operating democratically with equal rights and obligations for partners (Spieth et al., 2019), aiming to have a positive impact on society by taking into account the principles of solidarity and responsibility (Mas-Machuca et al., 2017), using their surpluses to achieve objectives for their own sustainable development (Bauwens, 2014; Spieth et al., 2019), and requiring the interaction of three actors a platform provider (website or app), a provider of goods or services, and those seeking access to those goods and services (Barnes and Mattsson, 2016; Benoit et al.,

2017), the following is proposed as a definition for the new concept of a *social collaborative company* (SCC):

“A social collaborative company is a private organization that is dedicated to promoting the exchange between people to sell or share products and/or services through a digital platform (website or app), for profit or not, whose explicit purpose with respect to its activity is to have a positive impact on the community. The company places the importance of the person before capital, with management decision-making processes being undertaken in a democratic way among its partners. It uses the outcome of economic performance (surplus) for the economic benefit of those who contribute to creating value and for the sustainable development of the company”.

Based on the main features of collaborative companies such as the use of the internet, interconnection between groups of people and/or assets, access to the use of underused assets (Bauwens et al., 2005), the achievement of significant interactions (trust), having an inclusive and global character (Sundararajan, 2017), and considering the social collaborative company definition in this paper, the following characteristics for an SCC can be established in the Table 3.

**Table 3.** Characteristics of social collaborative companies (SCCs)

Aspect	Characteristics
Economic and business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="448 1435 1289 1496">• The company produces goods or services with a positive economic performance, regardless of the size of the business or the turnover.</li> <li data-bbox="448 1525 1305 1585">• It pays a reasonable salary to its workers (never below the minimum wage of the regulation).</li> <li data-bbox="448 1615 1294 1675">• The welfare of partners, suppliers, and clients is pursued before the economic benefits.</li> <li data-bbox="448 1704 1321 1765">• The capital of the company is private from a group of individuals from civil society or a foundation.</li> </ul>

Aspect	Characteristics
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It has the explicit objective of benefitting the community (principles of solidarity and responsibility).</li> <li>• It is a private initiative created by a group of individuals or civil society organizations.</li> <li>• The distribution of surpluses for people and reserves of profits for the development of the activity or allocation for social assets are promoted.</li> </ul>
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is formed by the partners of the company or their representatives.</li> <li>• Decisions are made based on people and their contributions of work or services based on the social purpose.</li> <li>• The partners enjoy a high degree of autonomy. The distribution of shares between partners must guarantee that democracy can be exercised in decision-making.</li> <li>• Decision-making seeks to involve all interested parties.</li> <li>• There are equal rights and duties for partners.</li> </ul>
Business model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The economic activity is an exchange of goods or services between companies or individuals through a platform (website or app).</li> <li>• The activity is lawful.</li> <li>• It may be for profit or not.</li> </ul>

It is important to clarify in the context of this research, the following are not considered social collaborative companies: G2G (government to government), in which public organizations interact through the platform, even if they have an explicit objective of benefitting society (Stokes et al., 2014), companies that have interrupted activity for more than a year, and those whose activity does not require exchange in legal tender, for example time banks, barter, etc.

## 2.4 Quality in Social Collaborative Companies: A Literature Review

As stated above, in collaborative social companies there are at least three actors, the service provider, the platform, and the client (Barnes and Mattsson, 2016), and quality depends simultaneously on them and their interaction (Ert et al., 2016). None of the actors can be neglected, even more so in social collaborative companies, since these

social companies operate in the context of capitalism (Scholz, 2016), which must be competitive to be sustainable and to guarantee their long-term viability (Ertz & Leblanc-Proulx, 2018) for which quality is considered a key aspect (Priporas et al., 2017).

Therefore, in this field, we need to ask the following questions: How can standards be applied in a SCC? How can the quality of a product or service of an SCC be measured? What is the impact of the platform on customer satisfaction? To try to find an answer to these issues, a literature review has been carried out on the most relevant quality models and those related to the collaborative economy in order to present a quality model that serves to guide SCCs in their quest for competitiveness, sustainability, and survival.

#### *2.4.1. Quality Models in Social Activities*

The most important quality model related to quality in social activities is proposed by the European Quality of Social Services (EQUASS). EQUASS aims to improve the social services sector by involving providers in quality, continuous improvement, and learning and development to guarantee service users the quality of these throughout Europe (Melão et al., 2019). This certification was adopted by more than 650 companies in different European countries from 2012 to 2015 (Marimon et al., 2019), with a satisfaction rate of around 85% among the companies that have been certified (Melão et al., 2018). The EQUASS 2018 system comprises 10 quality principles: leadership, staff, rights, ethics, partnerships, participation, continuous improvement, results orientation, being person-centered, and comprehensiveness (EQUASS, 2018).

#### *2.4.2. Quality Service Model*

The main reference for quality service is the Parasuraman model (Parasuraman et al., 1985), which is still consulted today. The model proposes a service quality model based on an expectation–confirmation paradigm, which suggests that consumers perceive quality in terms of their perceptions. Thus, when customer expectations are greater than their perceptions of the delivery received, service quality is considered low. When perceptions exceed expectations, the quality of service is high. This model presents five “gaps” between customer expectation and

service delivery that might have a negative effect on perceived service quality: knowledge gap, design gap, performance gap, communication gap, and customer gap. In addition to considering expectation–confirmation, other proposals define quality as an aggregate of technical quality that measures the results of the service (the what) and the functional quality of the processes (how the service is made) (Grönroos, 2001).

#### *2.4.3. Quality and Excellence Model of European Foundation Quality Management (EFQM)*

EFQM is a globally recognized model of quality and excellence that aims to help organizations achieve success by identifying and understanding existing gaps to find the best solutions available. This model has had variations over time, and although it retains its original principles in the most recent version of the year 2019, it is based on the importance of the primacy of the customer; the need to take a long-term, stakeholder-centric view; and understanding the cause-and-effect linkages between why an organization does something, how it does it, and what it achieves as a consequence of its actions (Hauber, 2021).

The structure of the EFQM model answers three questions (blocks): direction, results, and execution. Direction: this block prepares the way for the organization to be a leader in its ecosystem and be well positioned to carry out its future. Results: the direction block sets the direction for the company, but then the organization needs to execute the strategy effectively and efficiently. Execution: this is what the company achieves because of the direction and results blocks, including a forecast for the future.

#### *2.4.4. Business Models in Collaborative Economy*

The quality management model for collaborative companies has been presented to evaluate the quality of the services provided by collaborative companies (Shahin & Samea, 2010). It is an adaptation (Shahin & Samea, 2010) of the Gap service quality model presented by Parasuraman et al. (1985). The model is reformulated

in a cyclical model to consider that gaps can exist every time the service is repeated. Additionally, if the service is repeated, it can be revised and improved over time by introducing best practices according Deming's cycle of PDCA (plan-do-check-act or plan-do-check-adjust) (Deming, 1993; Seth et al., 2005; Yarimoglu, 2014), and this proposal included an additional gap to take into account external and internal communication and later closed the gap between quality of service provided and customer perception.

Additionally, there is another adaptation to be introduced in order to adjust the model for quality management in in collaborative consumption services. It includes another cycle to consider the differences between the expectations and perceptions of the client vs. the platforms. This second cycle includes six new gaps; these two different cycles overlap in time, requiring simultaneous analysis. Although these two cycles have been represented concentrically, this does not imply that there is dependency between both cycles.

Another business model to consider is the sharing business model compass (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018). In this proposal, the model affirms that current models cannot account for the complexity underlying sharing business value propositions, nor can it offer a way forward for those interested in crafting models for the creation and delivery of sharing-based value. The compass specifies six distinct dimensions, which in combination allow for expanding the scope of business model possibilities for sharing start-ups and corporate ventures. These dimensions are platform type (actors being connected in the two-sided market by the intermediary), technology, transaction types (on the platform), business approach (profit-driven, hybrid with explicit social or environmental objectives, and mission-driven, where the primary goal is social and/or environmental benefits), shared resources (optimizing of new resources, finding a new home for used resources and the optimization of underutilized resources), and the governance model (with respect to decision-making and value exchange). Instead, the compass offers a range of 18 variables to choose from and combine across the six dimensions, providing orientation and supporting the profiling of sharing business. Regarding the valuation of collaborative economy and collaborative social economy companies, this model has four dimensions of these models, which are at the "core" of the model (platform



type, transaction types, business approach, and governance model) for considering the differences between models that are market-oriented and models that are closer to collaborative manners. In this way, the authors propose that it is possible to consider the realities of cooperatives and corporations.

#### *2.4.5. Some Considerations about the Platform and Governance*

Other studies that are not about quality models for collaborative companies or for collaborative social companies also provided useful information when making the model presented in this document. For example, the European Agenda for Sharing Economy (Cauffman, 2016) proposes the importance of the platform considering three key criteria: price, key contractual conditions, and key asset ownership. When these three criteria are met, there are clear indications that the collaborative platform exercises significant influence or control over the underlying service provider, which may in turn indicate that it should also be considered as providing the underlying service. This also forces us to consider that if the level of influence of the platform is high, it must respond to the client for a service/product quality that does not meet their expectations (Richardson, 2015).

Regarding governance for social collaborative companies, for good management it is necessary to take four categories of effects derived from the governance mechanisms established by a cooperative platform into account (Falcón-Pérez & Fuentes-Perdomo, 2019): redirecting capitalism: limitation of wages, restriction of capital investments, distribution of benefits, and search for alternative sources of financing; engaging the community: commitment to open community access, access to conflict scenarios, collective decision-making, and consensus building; democratic participation: democratic values, one member one vote, responsibility and accountability, and development of self-management strategies; and mandatory transparency: publishing information about company activities, publishing the use of user data, and allowing members to monitor and supervise.

## **2.5 Quality Management Model for Social Collaborative Companies (SCCs): A Proposal**

The quality management model for an SCC aims to present a guide so that it can offer products and services with an adequate level of quality so that their clients can grow (Kim, 2019; Marimon et al., 2021) and the company can be sustainable over time (Markides & Sosa, 2013). This model is a theoretical exercise based on the literature review and in-depth insights provided by experts from the field (see Appendix I). Expert rationale was added to ensure the quality of our analysis and to answer our objectives. We accomplished this step using validation from five experts included in the study using purposive sampling technique, who interpret the meaning and context to the findings from the literature review included in the formation of the quality model.

The SCC has just been defined in this research, but it is already possible to find some examples of it operating in the market; in fact, some companies are showing growth and resilience (Falcón-Pérez & Fuentes-Perdomo, 2019), and could be taking advantage of a quality management model to understand themselves better, given the complexity of the sharing economy for companies with a social mission (Mas-Machuca et al., 2017) and a democratic governance.

Considering that quality is about providing products and services in accordance with customers' expectations (Shahin & Sarrea, 2010), customers of the sharing economy have their own particularities. Currently, individuals create ideas and entertainment in addition to consuming them (Botsman & Rogers, 2010). Consumers often become prosumers (this is a new work endeavouring towards accomplishing the conceptual mix of the terms: producer and consumer) (Morell, 2011); that is, they have gone from being isolated individuals to being connected. When they make decisions, they no longer do so out of ignorance, but are informed (Barnes & Mattsson, 2016). They are no longer passive but are an active source of information feedback for companies (Markides & Sosa, 2013).

With this type of customer, the objective of collaborative quality is focused on satisfying the customer in a functional, emotional, and holistic way, since one of the consequences of globalization has been the generation of an interconnected economy, which is not

synonymous with equitable. This has led to a change in the profile of the consumer, who has become more aware and sensitive not only to their immediate environment, but also to the global one (Falcón-Pérez & Fuentes-Perdomo, 2019). However, how can the SCC have presented all the complexity? What is the importance of the platform? What is the importance of the product or service that it offers? What is the relationship between them?

The quality model proposes an easy answer to this type of question without losing sight of the fact that in SCCs the decision-making processes are participatory and more complex, the products and services needs to be competitive, but also remain engaged with their social mission (Pearce & David, 1987), and all this without losing sight of having viable financial results. The idea is that social enterprises generate wealth, are competitive, and can survive with good results in the current conditions that are so difficult (Scholz, 2016).

The literature review of the models allows us to consider the most important aspects that have been considered for the quality model, as can be seen in the Table 4:

**Table 4.** Aspects to Consider for the Quality Model for Social Collaborative Companies.

Model	Aspects
EQUASS	<p><b>Leadership:</b> Demonstrate governance, leadership, and social responsibility. They set ambitious organizational and service goals and promote best practices. They are committed to continuous learning and innovation.</p> <p><b>Results orientation:</b> Achieve the expected results, benefits, and best value for the customers and relevant stakeholders (including investors). The impacts of services are measured and monitored and are an important element of continuous improvement, transparency, and accountability processes.</p> <p><b>Continuous improvement:</b> Committed to continuous improvement of their services and results. They are proactive in meeting the future needs of customers and stakeholders, using information based on objective data to develop and improve.</p>

Model	Aspects
Quality service model	<p>The key aspect of this model is its proposal that the quality is related to the relationship between customers' needs, service expected, and service perceived, and that all GAPS can occur if the service is not managed in appropriate way and consider what the company must do to deliver a service according to the customers' expectations, taking into account key aspect such as the specifications of the services, external communications, and service design from pre-contact to post-contact with the customers.</p>
Quality and excellence model	<p><b>Presents three blocks:</b> direction (prepares the way for the organization to be a leader in its ecosystem and be well positioned to carry out its future), results (sets the direction for the organization, but then the organization needs to execute the strategy effectively and efficiently), and execution (what the organization achieves because of the direction and results blocks, including a forecast for the future).</p> <p>Inside these blocks, there are several aspects to be considered: The vision of future and the importance of the strategy includes the purpose, organizational culture, and leadership. On the other hand, the remark needs to involve stakeholders, create sustainable value, manage the operation and transformation, and finally invite consideration of the perception of interest groups and the strategic and operational performance.</p>
Quality service model for collaborative companies	<p>Model to evaluate the quality in services provided by collaborative companies, based on the GAP model from Parasuraman et al. (1985). The most relevant aspect considered for the models was the cyclical proposal, which considers that gaps can exist every time the service is repeated.</p> <p>This could be interpreted as the dynamic being continuous, and all the actions or continuous improvement affecting the general results of the company, according to Deming's cycle of PDCA (Deming, 1993). Also relevant is the service quality gap, such as the closing idea to explain the differences between expected service and perceived service, based on the previous five GAPS.</p>
Sharing Business Model Compass	<p>The compass specifies six distinct dimensions; the most relevant of them are the following: platform type: an expression of the type of actors being connected in the two-sided market by the intermediary; technology: the reliance on digital technologies for facilitating discovery and exchange on the platform; business approach: considered a business approach to reflect the financial and impact objectives of the company. The business approach taken by sharing economy start-ups ranges from profit-driven; hybrid, where the firm has explicit social or environmental objectives; and mission-driven, where the primary goal is a social and/or environmental benefit. Governance model: the approach adopted by the platform with respect to decision-making and value exchange.</p> <p>Using the compass, all its dimensions could be adapted to collaborative companies inside the regular economy (platform capitalism) and to more social companies (platform cooperativism).</p>

After having identified the aspects to consider and from the expert validation, three dimensions of the quality management model proposed are: management, operations, and continuous improvement. An uninterrupted cyclical relationship arises among them, in which each of these dimensions mutually influence each other; the aim is to combine the management with an excellent operation and keep improving (see Figure 2).

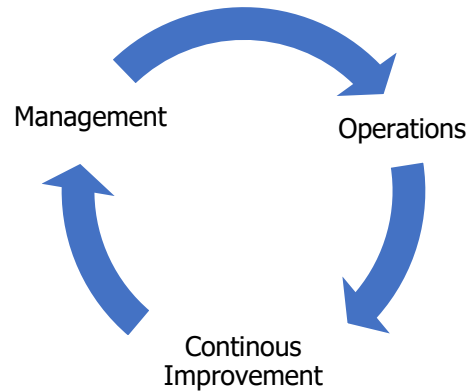


Figure 2. Dimensions of the quality model for social collaborative companies

In order to explain the relationship between each model reviewed and the dimensions proposed before in this quality model for social collaborative companies, it is presented in Table 5:

**Table 5.** Relationship between business and quality models considered and the dimensions of the quality model for social collaborative companies.

Dimension of the Quality Model Proposal	Relationship with the Models Considered in Key Aspects
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="576 1554 1302 1626">• <b>EQUASS:</b> Leadership (governance, leadership, and social responsibility).</li> <li data-bbox="576 1666 1362 1738">• <b>EFQM:</b> direction block (way for the organisation to be a leader in its ecosystem and be well positioned).</li> <li data-bbox="576 1778 1362 1841">• <b>Sharing Business Model Compass:</b> Business approach and governance dimension</li> </ul>

Dimension of the Quality Model Proposal	Relationship with the Models Considered in Key Aspects
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>EQUASS:</b> Results orientation</li> <li>• <b>Quality service model:</b> The GAPs between customers’ needs, service expected, and service perceived can occur if the service is not managed in appropriate way.</li> <li>• <b>EFQM:</b> results block (the organisation needs to execute the strategy effectively and efficiently), and execution block (excellence in strategic and operational performance).</li> <li>• <b>Sharing Business Model Compass:</b> platform and technology dimension</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>EFQM:</b> Committed to continuous improvement of their services and results.</li> <li>• <b>Quality service model for collaborative companies:</b> cyclical proposal where all actions or continuous improvement affect the general results</li> </ul>
Continuous improvement	

2.5.1. Management

Management is where it all begins; it is the world of ideas, where the directors think about what they want to do, why this value offer is socially collaborative, and what makes sense for this SCC in short, what needs to be done to deliver a sustainable value proposal for the stakeholders inside the collaborative economy environment. The management dimension is composed of four subcategories: strategy, leadership, social management, and governance. These subcategories work together and influence each other. This can be represented in a circle such as (see Figure 3):



Figure 3. Subcategories in management dimension

### *2.5.1.1. Strategy*

For this quality model, the purpose of the definition is to answer the following questions: why is it important to work on this? How does it intend to fulfil it? How can this purpose be kept over time? It is recommended that the company have a present mission and future vision and be very clear about what it wants to achieve in the short and long term. The purpose and vision support the strategy.

On the strategic level, it is necessary that the SCC have an understanding about the stakeholders' needs (leadership, social management, and governance). Finally, the strategy should have a concrete implementation plan, which explains how the mission and vision will be achieved.

### *2.5.1.2. Leadership*

In an SCC, leadership takes on a sensitive nature; its social mission should be accompanied by behaviors that are aligned with it at all levels of the organization. In leadership, it is important to highlight the need to develop a culture based on co-creation (Hauber, 2021) (like teamwork), where a win-win paradigm is part of it. The main objective of the leadership role is to inspire appropriate behaviors, redirect deviations, and give credibility to stakeholders on the alignment of the organizational culture with the company's social mission.

The leadership role defines the values, including the social mission inside the collaboration and participation environment; creates the conditions for realizing its activities according to these values; enables creativity, innovation, diversity, solidarity, etc.; and finally, promotes engagement to fulfil the mission, vision, and strategy.

### *2.5.1.3. Social Management*

A social mission is not enough. On the social edge, the collaborative social enterprise partly has doing well as its reason for being a positive influence in society. It is part of the "why"; therefore, a company need to consider its relationship with the society to which it belongs or which it wants to influence.

Management should include a deep analysis of the context, considering everything that happens around it, such as the environment, the relationship with the public administration, knowing who the stakeholders are, the needs and expectations of its customers, leadership, relationship with its suppliers, communications, perception of the values of its brand, etc. When the context is clear, it can give support to the strategy.

### *2.5.1.4. Governance*

The most critical voices of the collaborative economy point out that part of the problem is that power and wealth are concentrated in the hands of few people, so the benefits of scalability offered by platforms are overshadowed by something that resembles aggressive capitalist practices. One answer to this is found in platform cooperativism, or more broadly in SCCs as defined in this paper.

These companies have a democratic style of government, where one person equals one vote. However, it is essential that companies can handle the complexity that this form of decision-making involves, with its advantages and disadvantages. The main advantages are that greater involvement of workers is achieved, their decisions matter, and they learn from general aspects of the business; in short, what "happens" in the company depends on them, and they are not passive bystanders. However, this governance model faces difficulties such as needing to spend more time and effort in the



search for consensus and the apparent contradiction that the worker acts as “boss” at the same time.

Added to this, the SCC needs to guarantee transparency in the information for decision-making; it should have all the concrete mechanisms necessary to obtain consensus, along with appropriate leadership and control management that fosters participation and collaboration framed in solid values and the adequate integration of the mission and vision in each of the decisions that are made.

### 2.5.2. Operations

This dimension refers to all the processes that are necessary for a person to enjoy the products or services offered by the platform with an adequate quality (Hsieh, & Hiang, 2004), necessary for current and future success.

For the operations, the quality management model considers the importance of all the actors (provider, customer, and platform) in the quality perceived by the client (Akhmedova et al., 2020). An SCC may have the best product or service, but if it does not have good quality on its platform, the “total” quality perceived by the client will not be satisfactory. The same is true the other way around; a company can have the best platform, but if the product or service does not have the required quality, it will not leave the customer satisfied either. For this reason, all these actors must work towards operative excellence (see Figure 4).

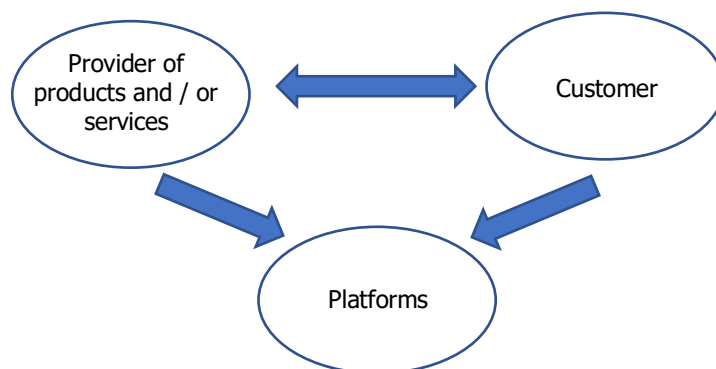


Figure 4. Subcategories in operations dimension

### *2.5.2.1. Provider of Products and/or Service*

In collaborative business models, anyone can be a provider of a certain product and service. Now, taking into account that the quality perceived by the client is higher when their expectations and their perception of the product or service received are aligned, it is important that the SCC applies professional tools for development, evaluation, and measurement of its performance. Another very important aspect about providers is that the company assumes the responsibility of defining in detail and efficiently communicating the needs and expectations of the client regarding the product and service and the platform that acts as an intermediary. This quality model does not include the type of contract, agreements, or terms and conditions that apply to each part, but only highlights the essential parts to improve the quality of products and services delivered for SCC.

The company needs to develop requirements for choosing providers and carry out an evaluation to determine their "suitability". It should also develop actions to advance suitability that do not meet the requirements and complement them to develop and improve their performance. A provider must have clear aspects such as operational capacity, cost structure, customer requirements, process indicators, platform operation, on time delivery, ethical code, etc.

On the other hand, it is necessary to evaluate the performance of providers, considering the comments and to go beyond the observation of customer comments on platforms. There may be dissatisfied customers who does not write a review. Additionally, when a customer writes a negative comment, negative perception of the quality of the product or service delivered is already in an individual's mind; therefore, it is not possible to carry out preventive actions.

### *2.5.2.2. Customers*

Even before defining the strategic aspects (value proposition, purpose, vision, etc.), the SCC need to know what its client wants, what it does not like, what it likes, etc. Knowing customer requirements and expectations is a key factor for sustainability and for designing operational processes capable of giving responses to customers. It should be borne in mind that the consumer is very informed and has great power; at the click of a button, a consumer can go to another platform and leave a very bad recommendation on the platform.

For the other side, do clients know what they can expect regarding quality of the products or services they obtain through an SCC? For the answer to always be affirmative, the SCC should ensure that the customer knows that they can expect the product and/or service that they have purchased, like an in-person experience, and what they should expect from the suppliers and the platform separately. This is important for the customer to have expectations that are in line with reality and for the SCC to assess its ability to adjust to certain customer requirements.

In addition to the specific requirements of the products and/or services that clients obtain through the platform, it is necessary to identify good practices that will generate an approach to customers, for example: communication strategy, brand image, the media where messages are transmitted, the availability and transparency in the handling of data, etc.

### *2.5.2.3. Platform*

In this quality model, the platform is considered part of the operational management. It is a facilitator of the delivery of products or services that correspond to the company's value proposition.

As in the case of the supplier, it is recommended for the SCC to invest part of its efforts in knowing the expectations and needs of the client regarding

the operation of the platform so that its operations are adequate and do not interfere with the perception of the quality of the products or services delivered.

In the case in which the company has an external platform provider, it is very important for the company to have a very close relationship with it, which includes adequate control over this subcontracted process, which can be a legal agreement about the ability to make changes, data processing, and other commitments about the ability to respond to changes in the organization to adapt to the products or services provided. If the platform is developed and managed internally, it must be considered a key actor, and the organization should be able to control that the platform has adequate capacity and efficient operations.

In any case, the company needs to ensure that it adequately communicates the client's requirements regarding the platform and that the platform is really in charge of facilitating contact between supplier and client and also, facilitating the delivery of products and services in accordance with what is established.

The platform is considered an added service to the product or service, but in addition to this, it is a great provider of data that must be analyzed for continuous improvement.

Finally, one cannot lose sight of the fact that any change in the provider's or platform's operations may affect the quality of the products or services; therefore, it is necessary for the organization to constantly analyze these changes and ensure that actions are taken so that the perception of customer quality is not negatively affected.

### *2.5.3. Continuous Improvement*

Continuous improvement is the consequence of data analysis or technological innovation. Data has great value; the digital environment allows us to record every action automatically and permanently, and consequently enormous amounts of information are generated. In this context, the SCC should ensure the reliability of the information it handles. On the other hand, the organization needs to ensure its ability to establish key indicators to analyze operational results, financial results, customer satisfaction results, and social results and can have an adequate an efficient management vision and control. In addition to this, it is important that the company makes sure robust data capturing systems are established in addition to defining key indicators suitable. All this is managed with tools according to their size and particular needs.

Once the SCC has the appropriate information systems, it should analyze the data and assess whether the results are aligned with the defined strategy, and from there, establish appropriate action plans. On the other hand, this data analysis should also allow models and predictions to be made that allow for more information about the future to be had.

After examining the data and defining the action plans according to the strategic guidelines, the analysis of non-financial indicators must also be taken into account; that is, the organization needs to carry out an analysis of the environment with a frequency appropriate to its size and activity, allowing for the needs of stakeholders to be continually reviewed, changes in market players to be possibly made, and for technological innovations and other changes in the environment that may affect an organization.

Finally, the organization needs to base part of its strength on encouraging continuous improvement from within, creating a mindset for creativity and innovation, including disruptive thinking as an essential ingredient in helping an organization generate increased value and an improved level of performance. The cyclical relations between the elements described before are shown below (see Figure 5).

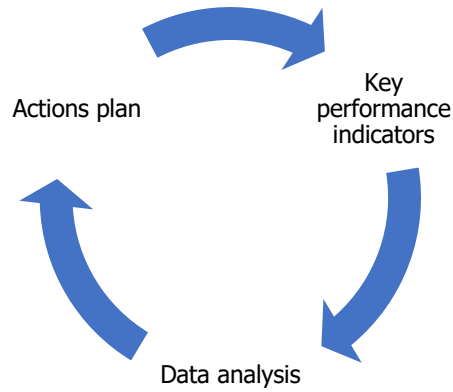


Figure 5. Subcategories in continuous improvement dimension.

The quality management model for social collaborative companies is represented in the Figure 6.

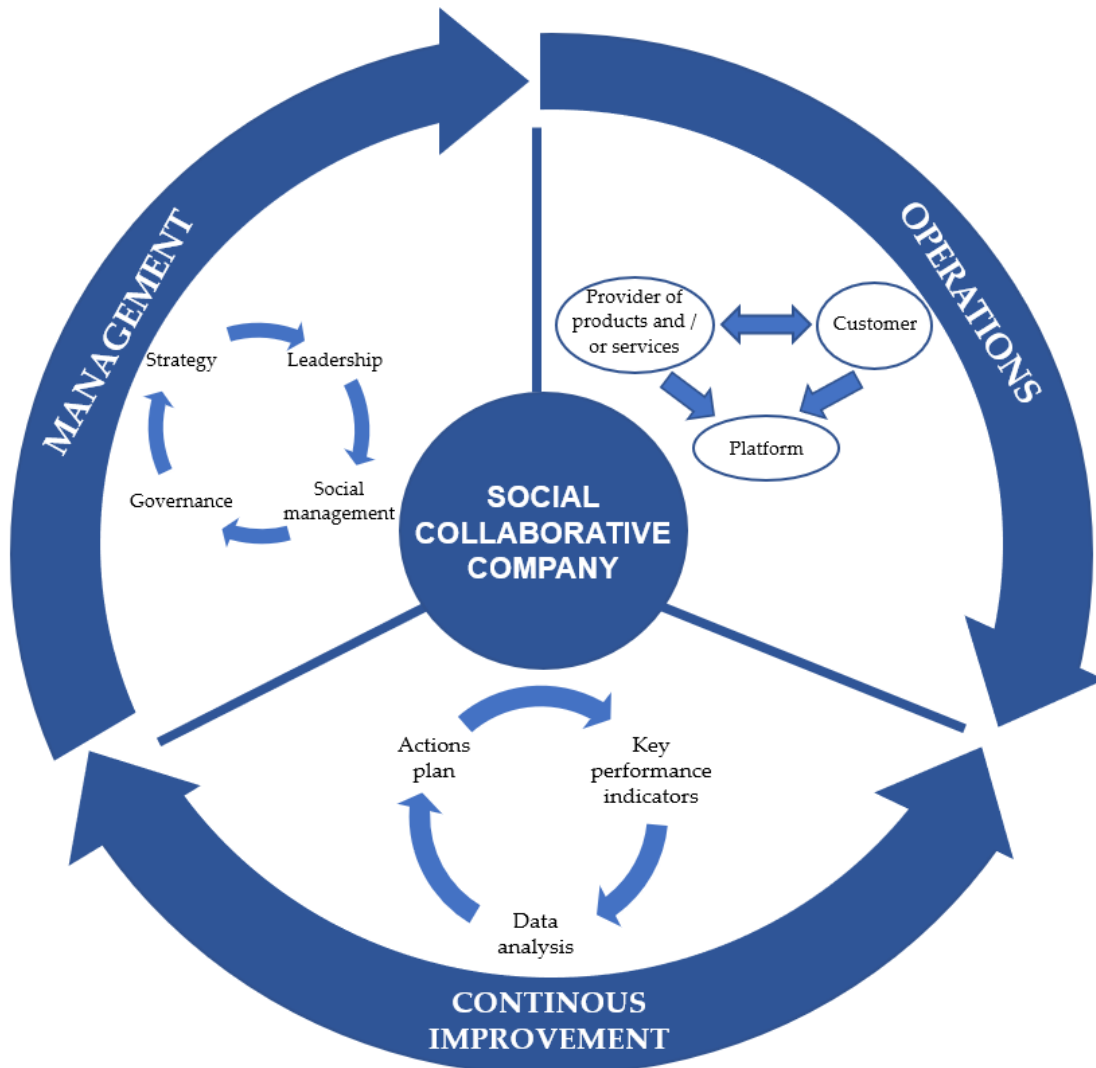


Figure 6. Quality management model for social collaborative companies

After this detailed literature review and development of the quality management model for social collaborative companies, we have now reached the stage where we need some independent feedback as to how well our model meets our objectives. We perform this validation through involving a group of five experts (practitioners and academics) in examining our quality management model components and completing a detailed questionnaire (see Appendix 1). A major part of this expert feedback is devoted to explaining the validation of the proposed model.

All the expert analysis and feedback of the model suggested similar viewpoints with some individual and important contributions. All the experts agreed that is not necessary to add one or more dimensions (management, operation, and continuous improvement) to the quality model, and that there is no key missing point in any dimension proposed. However, they have made comments and questions that were an appreciated input for the development of the model in each of these aspects.

About the management dimension, Expert 2 asked: "Does governance include management control?" To answer this, we considered that it was important to include the control management in this dimension; for the other side, Expert 5 recommended considering a Leadership dimension separately if the SCCs ask for it.

Regarding the operations dimension, Expert 4 suggests: "I would be explicit in what type of contracts, agreements, term and conditions apply to each link". With this comment, we are aware that this legal aspect is out of the quality model scope, because it is in the scope of this field of research, but the quality model offers the guideline of how these relations need to work for the SCC to deliver products or services in good quality conditions.

About the continuous improvement dimension, Expert 1 stated: "I am not sure if the society is represented in the model (not only the customer, but also society as participant and beneficiary)". For this reason, we added in the proposed SCC definition that these types of companies must have a social mission, a positive

impact in society. Expert 2 stated: "Control seem to be missing"; to answer this, we highlighted that the information received from of the data is necessary for an adequate decision and control management. Furthermore, Expert 3 stated: "Why not a PDCA model?" We include the Quality service model for collaborative companies in the literature review, including the PDCA model. Finally, Expert 4 recommended: "In future, you also need to look at disruptive tech or management ideas that could have impact on your company (SCC companies), even in other sectors". This is a very important comment for future research. Expert 4 added: "I would just add data somewhere as the source for this continuous loop". Regarding this comment, we highlight the use of data, like a source of information to business decisions towards a better performance.

Regarding the overall valuation based on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (absolutely), almost all the experts except for one (who gave 5 points) gave 4 points for the question "it is clear enough to provide an idea of how the model works". Furthermore, all experts gave equal importance to all the three dimensions of the quality model.

Therefore, we conclude that this quality model can be an important tool to help SCCs to know themselves better, and to have a guide for management with focus on delivering product and services at an adequate level of quality. Also, to record the data related with the key point and to develop actions oriented to improvement each time and be inputs for the current and future strategies.

## 2.6 Conclusions

Having reviewed the literature on the collaborative economy and the social economy, and having analyzed the points at which they meet, the new concept of a social collaborative company is proposed, which aims to frame companies that have a social mission and a democratic style of governance, whether or not they are cooperatives or operate through a platform in a collaborative environment, taking advantage of the benefits of efficiency and scalability, among others. This concept contributes to the recognition of companies; it is useful, because they can begin to delve into their particularities and develop more knowledge in this field.



The literature review has also included a search for quality models that apply to these types of companies regardless of the product or service they offer to the market, thereby detecting a gap that has been resolved with the proposal of a quality model for social collaborative companies with these objectives: (i) offering a management guide for excellence; (ii) being a tool for benchmarking; and (iii) being a tool for internal and external communication, which was validated by experts.

The quality model established has three categories (management, operations, and continuous improvement) that aim to provide answers to the most important aspects of management that have an impact on the quality of products or services. In the management category, the focus is on strategy, leadership, the social mission, and the complexity that this type of governance can have; in the operations category, the focus is on operational excellence, considering the platform as a facilitator of the product or service that must be treated simultaneously with the product or service, and finally the category of continuous improvement focuses on the importance of measuring the key aspects of management and making decisions based on objective data, which should constitute input for improvement. This quality model is open and can be combined with other management tools.

This study opens up interesting future avenues for research in the field of social economy and collaborative economy as regards the deepening of the concept of an SCC. On the other hand, the quality model has been based on a literature review and has not yet been validated; therefore, a qualitative or quantitative validation could be valuable research that would provide knowledge that would allow adjustments to the model and that could be improved so it can better serve the purpose for which it was designed.

The quality model presented in this research was designed for an SCC, which is a new concept that has been introduced in this document. To find these companies, it will be necessary to establish compliance criteria and evaluate whether the characteristics that have been initially defined are applicable to real companies. After this, another investigation can be the application of this model to real cases of SCCs and evaluate its effectiveness.

## Chapter 3. Study 2\*

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# **Quality Management Model for Social Collaborative Companies with a validation based in Gioia methodology.**

**\* Publication Reference:**

Moreno, P., Selvam, R. M., Marimon, F., 2023. A Quality Model for Social Collaborative Companies with a Validation based on Gioia Methodology. *International Journal for Quality Research*, 18(2). (in press)

### **3. Chapter 3. Study 2: Quality Management Model for Social Collaborative Companies with a validation based in Gioia methodology.**

#### **Publication Reference:**

Moreno, P., Selvam, R. M., Marimon, F., 2023. A Quality Model for Social Collaborative Companies with a Validation based on Gioia Methodology. *International Journal for Quality Research*, 18(2). (in press, see Appendix II).

#### **Impact factor and Quartile:**

- CiteScore 2021: 2.5
- SJR 2022: 0.296
- Impact score: 1.49
- h-index: 24
- Overall Rank / Ranking: 15256
- Category: Safety, Risk, Reliability and Quality= Q3 (best quartile)

#### **Contribution to the article:**

As the main researcher, I have been responsible for the review of the literature, the obtaining of the data, the processing of the information and the writing of the text. My supervisors, Frederic Marimon and Rejina Selvam have participated in the article in its approach, design, supervision, and review.

**Abstract:**

In this paper, a Quality Model for Collaborative Social Enterprises (SCC) proposed in the article 'On the Convergence of Collaborative and Social Economy: A Quality Model for the Combined Effect' (2021) was validated through the Gioia methodology. Semi-structured interviews were carried out based on a questionnaire applied to an intentional sample. As a result, the Quality Model was improved, and new aspects were recognized such as: the importance of sustainability in SCC even if the companies are non-profit, the importance of the communication of social mission, an adequate definition of the decision-making process, the consideration of aspects related to ethics in data management, the definition of platform requirements and customer experience, and, finally, the need to have a social impact assessment as part of the main indicators. In addition to a general review in terms of drafting and organisation of the model, maintaining its dimensions and graphic representation remained unchanged.

**Keywords:** *collaborative consumption; platform economy; digital economy; sharing economy; quality; social economy.*

### 3.1. Introduction

The collaborative economy is fueling interest in the academic field (Gutierrez et al., 2017). The literature refers to several phenomena that are quite close, and which overlap to a high degree, leading to some confusion among academics. Thus, (Belk, 2014) has analyzed the difference between the collaborative consumption, sharing economy, access economy, platform economy, and community-based economy constructs.

At the same time, interest has originated in the recent growth and success of the collaborative economy across the world, especially in accommodation and transportation services (Hamari et al., 2016; Hossain, 2020). However, the collaborative economy has also raised concerns such as the unequal distribution of wealth, legal and tax loopholes, and precarious working conditions (Scholz, 2019; Sundararajan, 2017). In light of these concerns companies must consider both the interests of their users and the common good by adopting social principles such as solidarity and responsibility (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Wilhelms et al., 2017). The idea is for social and collaborative companies to come together, combining the best of both worlds (Olsi, 2013), and to adopt a collaborative-social perspective offers quality products and services, which in turn allows for sustainable development over time.

Taking the above into consideration, the Quality Model for SCCs was created in a previous investigation and is validated in this paper. In the SCC context,

It is necessary to expound upon that companies are considered collaborative, or operate under collaborative economy business model, when their platform act as intermediaries (Ert et al., 2015). Therefore, these companies require the participation of three entities involved: (a) a platform provider who facilitates the exchange, (b) a service provider, and (c) a client who seeks access to assets and consumes products (Barnes & Mattson, 2016; Benoit et al., 2017).

Hence, the present study aims to achieve the following objectives in order to validate the Quality Model for SCCs:

The identification of the main aspects of the Quality Model for SCC, through a statement description in a questionnaire to be applied by an expert group. To analyse the information collected through a questionnaire by using a grounded theory approach through Gioia methodology. To incorporate the knowledge acquired in the validation process into the theoretical Quality Model for Social Collaborative Companies to improve and develop a final version.

Through the accomplishment of the aforementioned objectives, this research papers aim to provide an enhanced and validated Quality Model for SCC, which serves as a practical guide for companies to provide products and services of sufficient quality in a demanding setting in a complex environment, while remaining committed to their social mission (Richardson, 2015) without losing the objectives of generating wealth, being competitive, and surviving (Zale, 2016).

The Quality Model for Social Collaborative Companies is pertinent to academic and professional communities that are keenly interested in studying quality, management, collaborative, and social economy.

### **3.2. Context background and theoretical underpinnings**

To explain the validation of the Quality Model for SCCs we will start by providing a definition of an SCC (Moreno et al., 2021). An SCC is a private organisation that is dedicated to promoting the exchange between people to sell or share products and/or services through a digital platform (website or app), for profit or not, whose explicit purpose is to have a positive impact on the community. The company places the importance of the person before capital, with management decision-making processes being undertaken in a democratic way among its partners. It uses the outcome of economic performance (surplus) for the economic benefit of those who contribute to creating value, and for the sustainable development of the company.

In this context, it is important to note that companies that interact with public organizations through their platform (G2G), those that have not engaged in economic activity for at least a year, and those that do not engage in economic transactions (such as barter and time banks) cannot be considered SCC. Therefore, this quality model

pretends to be a guide for SCC, so that they can offer for their clients products and/or services with a competitive level of quality taking into account that the expectations of the customers of the collaborative economy are relevant for company success (Fuster Morell, 2011; Shahin & Samea, 2010) because they are highly informed customers, and in turn an active source of information (Barnes & Mattsson, 2016; Markides & Sosa, 2013).

In the same way, the quality model considers the participative nature of the social companies that have more complex decision-making processes, keeping engaged their social mission, and additionally that they must have a viable financial result to be sustainable over time. The concept revolves around the notion that SCC are capable of creating prosperity, completing effectively, and thriving under present circumstances.

The Quality Model for an SCC (Moreno et al., 2021) is composed of three dimensions: management, operations, and continuous improvement, each of three dimensions influence each other and are represented in a circular way similar to the improvement PDCA cycle (Deming, 1993). It is mainly based on these Quality Models: Quality Models in social activities, such as EQUASS model (EQUASS, 2018; Melão et al., 2018; 2019; Marimon et al., 2019)); Quality service models, such as Parasuraman (Grönroos, 2001; Parasuraman et al., 1985); the Quality and Excellence Model of European Foundation Quality Management (EFQM, 2019) (Escrig-Tena et al., 2019); (Fonseca, 2022); business models in collaborative economy; (Deming, 1993); (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018); (Shahin, 2010); and other considerations about Collaborative Economy and Governance (European Commission, 2016); (Falcón-Pérez & Fuentes-Perdomo, 2019); (Richardson, 2015). In essence, the objectives of the Quality Model for SCCs are to integrate management with effective operations and pursue continuous improvement over the long term.

### **3.3. Methodology**

To validate the Quality Management Model for SCC proposed, a quantitative study and inductive approach has been used, based on grounded theory that was initially proposed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967 (Sato, 2019), and which was subsequently developed by

other successors such as (Corbin and Strauss, 1990); (Charmaz & Thomberg, 2021); and (Gioia et al., 2013). The latter is known as Gioia methodology and has been used in many studies (Nag & Gioia, 2012). This methodology is a systematic approach to qualitative research, which considers that the information collected in interviews is useful to identify findings based on the experience of the interviewees and is useful for the reinforcement of a proposed theoretical model (Gioia, 2021).

In this article, purposive sampling (Sekaran, 2003) has been considered as a methodology for validation using the Gioia method through an expert validation. For this paper, we decided obtain information from two different samples: academics and professionals, so that the validation has a broader range of expert knowledge that adds value.

### *3.3.1. Sample selection*

To select the sample of academics, the following steps have been followed: we consulted the Web of Science using the keywords: Quality, Social Economy and Collaborative Economy. This produced 11,430 authors from which we selected those who were listed on publications in the last five years as corresponding authors. This produced 5,824 authors, then only those who had articles were selected (discarding other types of publications) and 4,619 authors remained. Then a filter was applied by selecting the following specific fields: economics; administration, business, commercial finance, multidisciplinary sciences, operations research management sciences, industrial engineering, multidisciplinary engineering, and interdisciplinary social sciences. Finally, there were 77 corresponding authors for the academic sample.

To choose the practitioners for the sample various sources were utilized. Initially, a search was carried out on the LinkedIn platform using specific keywords: Social Economy, Collaborative Economy, EQUASS and Quality, from which 3,457 professionals were found in European countries. Then a filter was applied to select professionals with more than seven years of professional experience in Quality and/or Collaborative companies and who also had a master's degree level education, which left 53. In addition, we also had eight prestigious speakers who



participated in the 5th International Congress on Engineering and Quality Management in 2022, (Portugal), as well as seven professionals recommended by doctoral professors from the Universitat Internacional de Catalunya for their extensive experience in collaborative economy and/or quality. Thus, the sample consisted of 68 practitioners.

By combining both samples we had a total of 145 people, each of them was contacted by email requesting their collaboration in the study by means of their participation in a semi-structured interview by videoconference. After 45 days, 126 people had not replied to the request by email and were discarded from the research; four of them replied saying that they could not participate for different reasons, and 15 of them agree to participate in the research by responding to the semi-structured interviews. We consider our experts as knowledgeable agents, this means that they know what, how, and why they know and try to do things in a specific way (Gioia, 2013).

### *3.3.2. Conducting interviews*

To do the validation, individual semi-structured interviews were carried out on the sample obtained; as it is considered that it allows a deep exploration of the research topic (Charmaz & Liska Belgrave, 2012; Lune & Berg, 2017; Ritchie et al., 2013).

The questionnaire for these semi-structured interviews was prepared based on an in-depth literature review, from which a list of 30 statements was developed that describe the main aspects of the Quality Model for SCC. The questionnaire was developed in English and evaluated by three PhD academics from the Universitat Internacional de Catalunya (who are experts in business and quality management) with the purpose of ensuring that the selected statements adequately explained the proposed Quality Model for SCC. Once the corrections were made, the final version of the questionnaire consisted of 28 items, divided according to the dimensions of the Quality Model for SCC (management, operations, and continuous improvement). The intention is that each expert contributes their frank opinions on each of the statements and performs a numerical assessment using a Likert

scale from 1 to 4 in terms of: clarity (how easily understood the statement is), coherence (how logically it is related to the dimension under consideration), and relevance (whether the statement is essential or important and should be included). The questionnaire for the semi-structured interviews is included in the Appendix III.

Finally, we sent the questionnaire (see Appendix III) and the whole previously mentioned article: by email to the 15 people who agreed to take part in the study, with the idea that they could review it themselves. Then an appointment is made for the interview by video conference.

However, during the scheduling of the interviews, only nine professionals (3 academics and 6 practitioners) agreed to participate, forming the total sample. This number is considered sufficient in qualitative research as a sample size between 5 and 25 is generally adequate (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018).

The following table features general demographic information about the respondents, such as age, professional experience, field, and so on.

**Table 6.** Demographic information of respondents

Demographic feature	Information
Gender	Female: 1 Male: 8
Age	From 25 to 34: 1 From 35 to 44: 3 From 45 to 54: 4 More than 55: 1
Education Qualification	Bachelor's degree: 1 Postgraduate degree: 5 PhD degree: 3
Year of experience	From 6 to 15: 3 From 15 to 25: 6 More than 25: 0
Occupation	Professional: 1 Manager /Executive: 5 Academic: 3

During the interviews, which lasted between 30 and 45 minutes, the participants were asked to share their opinions on each of the statements listed in the questionnaire and provide a numerical rating on the criteria of clarity, coherence, and relevance. The interviews were conducted in accordance with these statements and were recorded with the participant's consent. Following each interview, transcripts were carried out and data was organized using Gioia methodology. First, the main themes and ideas contributed by the participants were identified, which is similar to the process of open coding.

Next, data analysis continued, and similarities and differences between the responses were observed and grouped into first-order categories. These initial categories were further analyzed, and similar concepts were grouped together to form second-order categories, reducing the total number of categories. Finally, the emerging concepts were analyzed to determine if they fit within the scope of the study and were merged into the aggregate dimensions. The visual display of this procedure is referred to as a data structure (Gioia et al., 2013, 2021).

### *3.3.3. Data analysis*

The following figures show the data structure, once the information given by the participants in the interview has been organised and divided according to the dimensions of the Quality Model for SCCs: management, operations, and continuous improvement.

Starting with management dimension illustrated in Figure 7, the diagram depicts the data structure regarding the participants' opinions about the statements proposed for this dimension (1–12). Nine second-order themes emerged: Sustainability, Strategic Plan, Communication, Social Purpose, Leadership Evaluation, Leadership Role, Co-leadership, and Democratic Decision-Making process. These were subsequently organised in four aggregate dimensions: Management control; Social Purpose definition and communication; Leadership in SCC and Democratic Decision-Making process definition.

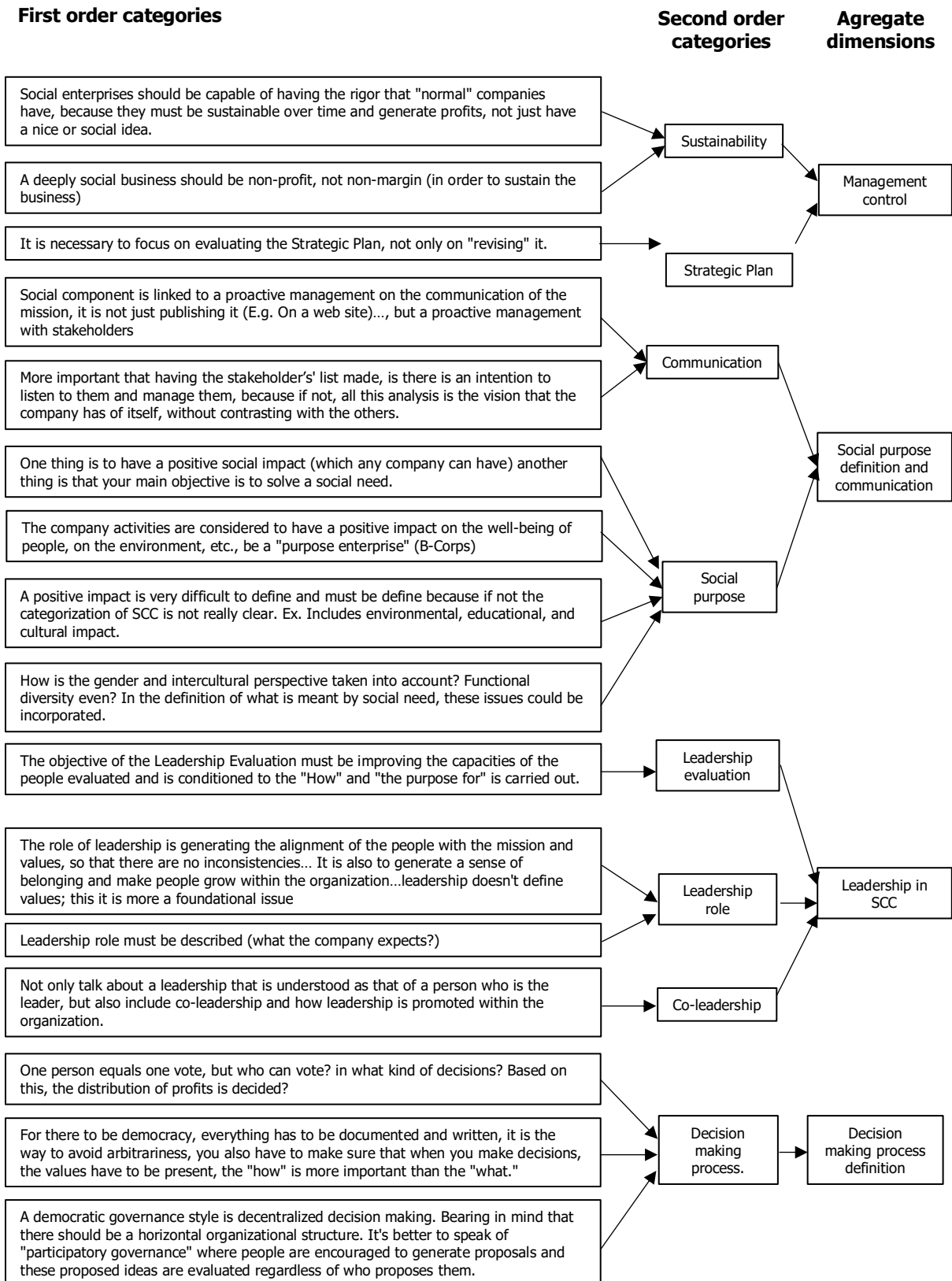


Figure 7. Data Structure (Gioia Methodology) of the Quality Model for SCC Management Dimension

Management control is made up of the second order categories: Sustainability and Strategic Plan. Sustainability refers to the desire of some interviewees to indicate that companies must guarantee good financial results to guarantee their durability over time, with non-profit organisations (participant 5). In summary 'it is not just [enough] to have a nice idea' (participant 2). Also, a Strategic Plan should be made, as indicated by the Quality Model for SCCs, but which 'must also be constantly reviewed to adjust the company's decisions accordingly' (participants 3 and 6).

Social purpose definition and communication comes from the grouping of the second order categories: Communication and Social Purpose. Regarding Communication, it is important to remark that the communication of the social mission or social component must be proactive in relation to all stakeholders (participants 2 and 3), and it must be ensured that each one really knows them and their opinions and ideas about topics of interest 'it is not enough to post it on the website as a facelift' (participant 3). Social Purpose has been the second-order theme most commented on by the interviewees. One common point was: 'what does a "positive impact" really mean? To create jobs? To solve a social need? To [have an] impact on the well-being of people, education, on the environment, etc.? Is it important to consider gender, functional diversity, and intercultural perspective within that?' (Participants 1, 2, 3, 6, and 8), for instance in the Quality Model for SCC a 'positive impact' is not defined properly.

Regarding Leadership, some important comments from the interviewees were related to the way that the company must define leadership given its social purpose (participants 7 and 9), and even in a broader concept including co-leadership and how this can be promoted (participant 9). Also, the SCC must ensure the proper alignment with its social mission and vision at all levels, to generate a sense of belonging (participants 1 and 5). Likewise, 'the how' and 'the purpose for' (participant 7) and similar elements must be present in the day-to-day decisions made by leaders, along with how their performance can be evaluated in this regard (participant 7 and 9). Finally for this part, the aggregate dimension is the Decision-Making process definition. One of the points the SCC definition 'is the democracy in the decision-making process where one person is equal [to] one vote, but who can vote? On what kind of decisions? [Do] the decisions include the distribution of

profits?’ (Participant 3), ‘to clarify these points and gain transparency and decentralization, everything in this regard must be documented and written without forgetting that “the how” is most important than ‘the what’ (participant 7) and ‘establishing processes that encourage people to generate proposals that will be evaluated regardless of who proposes them’ (participant 1). Next figure shows the data structure representation:

Regarding Operations dimension of the Quality Model for SCC, figure 8 represents the data structure for the operation dimension that comes from the opinions and comments of the participants about the proposed statements (13–23). From this, five second-order themes have emerged: social companies’ network, ethics in data management, platform requirements, customer expectations and customer experience feedback, which have subsequently been organised in three aggregate dimensions: Social Collaborative Companies Ecosystem promotion, Data Management process and validation and Customer Relationship Process Definition.

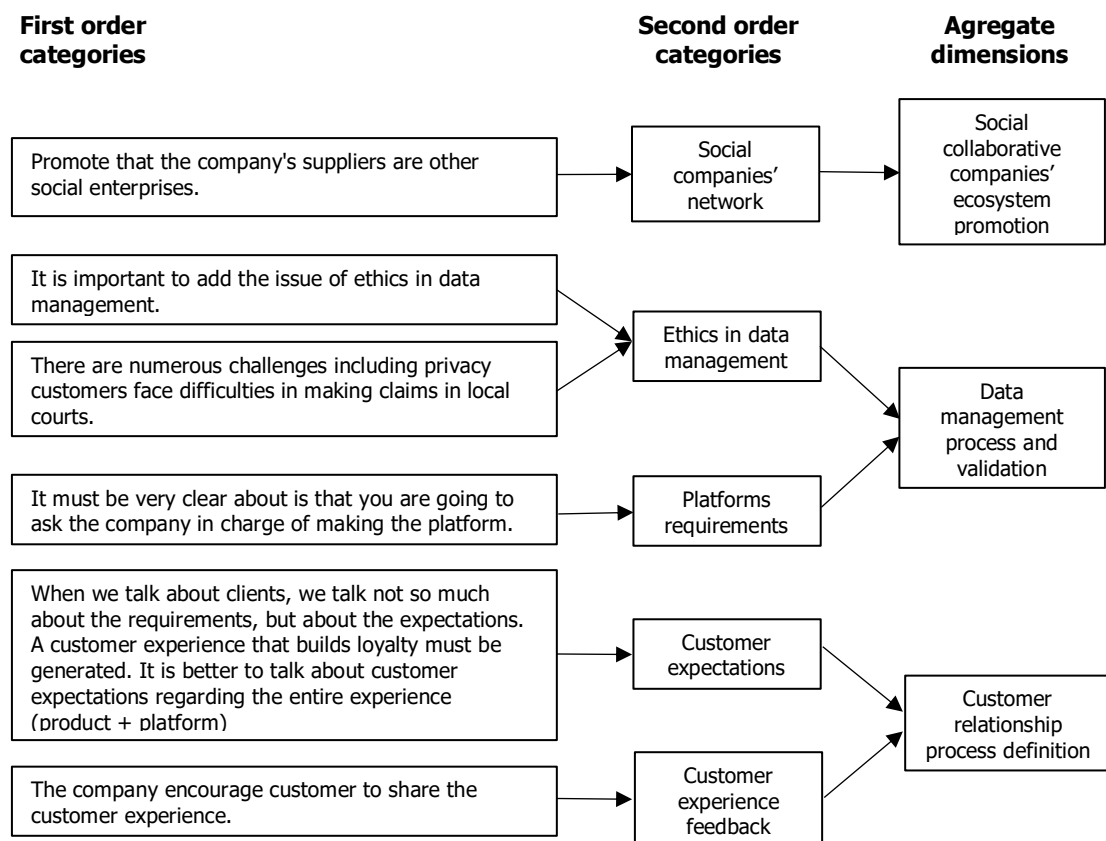


Figure 8. Data structure (Gioia Methodology) of the Quality Model for SCC, Operations Dimension

Social Companies network is about the need to consider the social impact within the whole supply chain. For instance, SCCs should consider promoting business relationships with suppliers that are also social companies' (participant 4). This is the aggregate dimension named Social Collaborative ecosystem promotion.

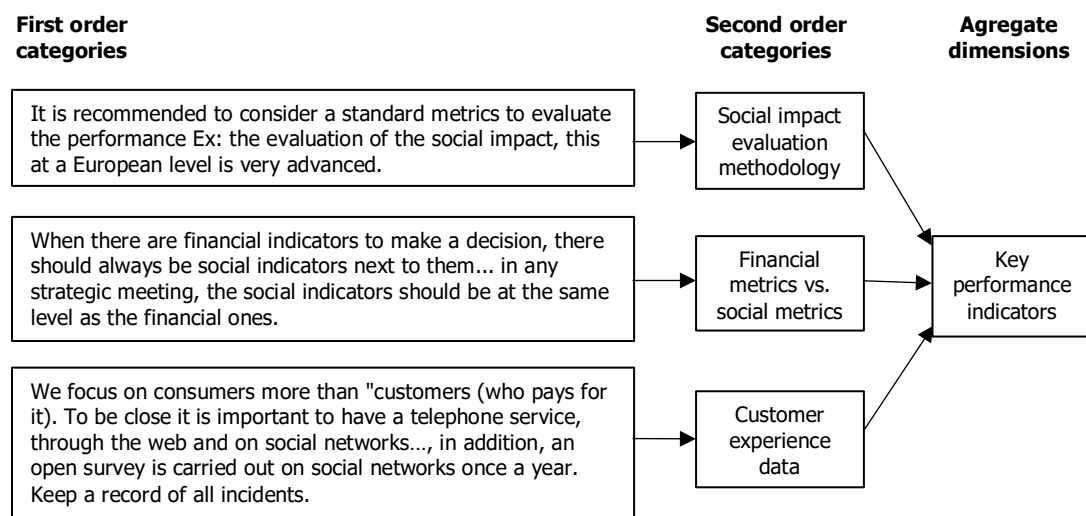
In the Quality Model for SCC, data are a key value; the main comments of the participants have been directed to the need to include ethics in data management (participants 4 and 8) 'considering that there are challenges about privacy, and traceability that can be a problem for customer claims management and for future claims in local courts' (participant 8). Also, 'it is important to remark that the data management which comes through the platform must be properly defined even if the company obtains platform services from an external company' (participant 4). All of the above has been organised in the aggregate dimension data management process and validation.

In the aggregate dimension Customer Relationship Process Definition, two second-order themes are included: Customer Expectations and Customer Experience Feedback. Regarding customer expectations, one of the participants comments that 'the Quality Model for SCC should talk less about customer "requirements" and more about customer "expectations" that lead to generating a positive customer experience' (participant 6). On the other hand, in order to learn precisely what the customers expect and how the company can get closer on this, the best way is to encourage customers to give their ratings and/or comments about the product or service on the platform (participants 1 and 6).

Finally, for the Continuous Improvement dimension of the Quality Model, figure 9 represents the data structure that comes from the opinions and comments of the participants about the proposed statements (23–28). Here are three second order themes: social impact evaluation methodology, financial metrics versus social metrics, and customer experience data. These have been arranged in one aggregate dimension named Key Performance Indicators.

Regarding the Key Performance Indicators, the participants comment on procedures to calculate the main metrics to drive the real success of this company,

such as: social impact metrics (participant 1) or others that not only show the financial results, but also really speak more of social management, and both types of indicators (financial and social) at the same level should be used as a base for the main company decisions (participants 7 and 9). In this part, the participants also insist on the importance of 'captur[ing] data from customers from different sources: telephone service, open surveys, social network channels, etc., all this with the proposal of having a strong drive to make the best-informed decisions for the company' (participant 6).



*Figure 9. Data structure (Gioia Methodology) of the Quality Model for SCC, Continuous Improvement Dimension*

Regarding the validation in terms of clarity, coherence, and relevance (from 1 to 4), the following result has been found (considering all the participants' answers):

In terms of clarity, the total average value obtained for the 28 statements in the questionnaire was 3.65. The smallest value was 3.00 (in statement 5) and the highest was 4.00 (in statements: 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28), for the latter the wording must be reviewed so that they are understood better.

Regarding coherence, the total average value obtained for the 28 statements in the questionnaire was 3.76. The smallest value was 2.88 (in statement 5) and the



highest 4.00 (in statements: 2, 5, 7, 10, 11, 13, 15, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28), with which it is concluded that the relationship between these statements and their proper meaning in the Quality Model must be reviewed.

Finally, in term of relevance, the total average value obtained for the 28 statements in the questionnaire was 3.92. The lowest value was 3.63 (in statement 2) and the highest was 4.00 (statements: 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22, therefore, all the statements are considered relevant, and it is not necessary to eliminate any of them,

It was found that 4 of the 28 statements (3, 12, 16 and 21) obtained an average score of 4 in the three aspects (clarity, coherence, and relevance), therefore they are left without any change. On the other hand, 5 statements (5, 10, 23, 24 and 25) were found with an average result of less than 3.75 in the three aspects evaluated, which were modified accordingly. All the changes made in the Quality Model for SCC s were contrasted with the findings exposed in the corresponding data structure. The results are presented in Appendix IV.

### **3.4 Quality Model for Social Collaborative Companies (SCC) update**

Based on the information previously mentioned, there is a set of findings that come from the opinions of the experts and that, on the one hand, have been organised in the data structure (Gioia) and, on the other hand, in the results of the assessment of clarity, coherence and relevance.

Regarding these findings, the entire wording has been revised, and later minor changes have been made. Subsequently, the findings of the Gioia Methodology have been included, which are presented below (Table 7).

**Table 7.** Findings for the Quality Management Model for SCC by aggregate dimensions.

Model dimension	Model subcategory	Aggregate dimension Gioia	Changes to be incorporated
Management	Strategy	Management control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include the economic sustainability that guarantees the survival of the business and all the parties involved, even if the company is a non-profit business.</li> <li>• Include the point that the Strategic Plan and Context Analysis must be evaluated, reviewed, updated, and communicated with a frequency that adjusts to changes in the business environment of the company.</li> </ul>
	Social Management	Social purpose definition and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace mission with social mission, and social purpose must be clearly defined.</li> <li>• Include the point that SCC must assure that its activities have a positive impact on the wellbeing of the people related, and that can also mean by an enterprise with purpose.</li> </ul>
	Leadership	Leadership in SCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include the point that the leadership role model must be clearly defined in job descriptions and considered in the hiring process, and the performance must be evaluated periodically with specific and objectives tools given that the purpose of this is to reinforce their capacities.</li> </ul>
	Governance	Decision Making process decentralization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include a statement highlighting the importance of having written rules for all aspects of the decision-making process that should be known by all parties involved to prevent ambiguity and biased decisions.</li> <li>• Include the point that the process definition must be oriented to guarantee not only democracy, but also decentralized decision making in most cases whenever possible.</li> </ul>
Operations	Provider of products and/or services	Social collaborative companies' ecosystem promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include the point that the company must give preference to suppliers with a social purpose, in order to promote them and expand their network of action considering the common good.</li> </ul>

Model dimension	Model subcategory	Aggregate dimension Gioia	Changes to be incorporated
	Platform	Data Management process and validation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include the point that the company must define in proper detail all the requirements about the platform.</li> <li>• Include the point that ethics in data management must guarantee the privacy of the customers' personal data, the adequate availability of data for handling customers claims, and potential legal claims.</li> <li>• Include the point that it is necessary for the company to have an adequate evaluation system on the performance of the platform, which provides objective information on a regular basis, and that this information is an input for the construction of key indicators in decision making.</li> </ul>
	Customers	Customer relationship definition process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change customer requirements for customer expectations.</li> <li>• Include that the SCC must have a system to evaluate customer satisfaction and to record relevant information when they are part of the operations, encouraging the customers to evaluate the product and/or service and to share them.</li> <li>• Include that the result of this evaluation must be translated to relevant information to be discussed at a strategic level.</li> </ul>
Continuous improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key performance indicators</li> <li>• Data Analysis</li> <li>• Actions Plan</li> </ul>	Key performance indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include that the SCC needs to make sure they possess suitable tools that match their size and requirements.</li> <li>• Include the analysis of non-financial indicators considering standards metrics for social impact; these social indicators should be at the same level as the rest of key metrics.</li> <li>• Includes that the action plan must have concrete resources.</li> </ul>

### 3.5. Conclusions

After the validation, following interesting results were obtained. In terms of the Management dimension, SCCs should have a mission or social mission with a clearly defined social purpose (it should be an enterprise with purpose). It must ensure that its activities have a positive impact on the well-being of the people related, while also ensuring its own survival.

This means that the economic sustainability of SCCs must be guaranteed, even if the companies are non-profit organisations. In order to achieve this, among other things, it is important to evaluate, review, and update the Strategic Plan and Context Analysis with a frequency that adjusts to their activities and the changes in the company business environment. Moreover, there should be a strong and well oriented leadership; this includes clearly defining the leadership role in job descriptions that will be considered in future hiring processes, and periodical performance evaluations with specific and objective tools given that the purpose of this is to reinforce their capacities. But at the same time it should be kept in mind that SCCs decision-making process is the center of their reason to be, and it is necessary that all aspects are related to the decision-making process, have rules defined in writing and are known by all those involved, in order to avoid lack of definition and arbitrariness. This way the process definition will be oriented to guarantee not only the democracy, but also decentralised decision-making whenever possible.

For the Operations dimension, it is important to consider the SCC environment and collaborate to reinforce each other's tasks. This could include the point that the company could give preference to suppliers with a social purpose, in order to promote them and expanding their network of action considering the common good. Another important point is that in some cases the operations descriptions in SCCs can be complex because there are different actors involved (suppliers of goods and services, platform suppliers and its customers). For this reason the company must define in proper detail all the requirements about the platform to understand its own process and take decisions given the operation's aspects. While the operations are running, the platform is handling a lot of data that come mainly from its customers. Here it is important to include considerations about ethics in data management to guarantee the privacy of the customers' personal data, while maintaining adequate availability of data to handle

customers' claims and potential legal claims. At the same time, the assurance of real customer satisfaction and the proper development of operations is necessary for the company to have an adequate evaluation system for the performance of the platform.

This will provide objective information on a regular basis which is an input for the construction of key indicators in decision making, including a specific system to evaluate the customer satisfaction and to record relevant information when they are part of the operations, encouraging the customer to evaluate the product and/or service and to share them. In the end, it is crucial to transform all the outcomes of this evaluation into significant information that can be deliberated at a strategic level.

For the Continuous Improvement dimension, the main findings were related to performance evaluation tools, the information analysis approach, and concrete actions plans. These include the point that the SCC needs to make sure they possess suitable tools that match their size and requirements. It is also important to consider that the assessment of non-financial metrics should be carried out using established benchmarks for measuring social impact. These social indicators should be at the same level of relevance to the rest of key metrics and afterwards, it is critical to analyse all this information so that the action plan must have concrete resources.

For the Quality Model for SCCs in general, in addition to the previous consideration included, a review was done in terms of the drafting and organisation of the model itself, although it maintained its dimensions, and its graphic representation unchanged (see Appendix V). Overall, the results discussed above suggests that the model has a broader vision adapted to the needs of the SCCs that contributes to the achievement of the objectives from its first proposal: (i) to offer a guide for excellence management; (ii) to be a benchmarking tool; and (iii) being a means for internal and external communication. Likewise, this quality model is flexible and can be integrated with other management tools.

This research offers promising possibilities for futhers studies in the area of social and collaborative economies. First, regarding the in-depth advancements within the concept of SCC. One possible direction is to expand teh analysis to a larger group of experts and apply quantitative method for statistical validation. This would allow for evaluating the effectiveness of applying the model to actual SCCs, which would requiere establishing compliance criteria and assessing the applicability of the defined characteristics to real

companies that meet the definition of SCCs. Additionally, it may be worthwhile to study this quality model in other types of social companies, like B Corp certified companies, to identify similarities, differences, and measurements of their impact.

## Chapter 4. Study 3\*

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# **Quality Management Model for Social Collaborative Companies application. Case studio to a social Electrical Car Sharing company**

\* **Publication Reference:** *Currently under revision*

Moreno, P., Selvam, R. M., Marimon, F., 2023. Quality Model for Social Collaborative Companies: Implementation methodology using the case of carsharing company. Long Range Planning.

## **4. Chapter 4. Study 3: Quality Management Model for Social Collaborative Companies application. Case studio to a social Electrical Car Sharing company.**

**Publication reference:** *Currently under revision* (Confirming submission in Appendix VI)

Moreno, P., Selvam, R. M., Marimon, F., 2023. Quality Model for Social Collaborative Companies: Implementation methodology using the case of carsharing company. Long Range Planning.

### **Impact factor and Quartile:**

- CiteScore 2022: 12.2
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### **Contribution to the article:**

As the main researcher, I have been responsible for the review of the literature, design, the obtaining of the data, the processing of the information and the writing of the text. My supervisors, Frederic Marimon and Rejina Selvam have participated in the article in its approach, design, supervision, and review.



## Abstract

This article presents a methodology using a descriptive explanatory approach for implementing the validated Quality Model for Social Collaborative Companies (SCCs). The methodology comprises five steps: SCC identification, preparation, assessment, action plan, and implementation. The methodology was applied in a case study conducted at Som Mobilitat, a company based in Barcelona, Spain. The action plan step of the methodology focuses on developing a comprehensive plan to address identified gaps or areas for improvement. We present the findings, implications, and a discussion on future research on the development of a comprehensive plan to address the identified gaps. However, the proposed actions, based on identified gaps, fall outside the scope of this paper due to their implications for the company's strategy, resources, timelines, and internal functioning, which extend beyond the scope of academic research.

**Key words:** *collaborative consumption; platform economy; car sharing; sharing economy; quality; social economy.*

## 4.1. Introduction

Previous studies have discussed the convergence between a collaborative economy and a social economy, highlighting their potential complementarity and areas of overlap (Moreno et al., 2021). A collaborative economy offers benefits such as resource efficiency, income redistribution (Muñoz and Cohen, 2018), and direct value exchange among citizens (Scholz, 2019). However, it also raises concerns about concentrated investments, dominant players, and inequitable distribution of value (Botsman and Rogers, 2010; Newlands, 2016). On the other hand, a social economy emphasizes economic democracy, social utility (Falcón-Pérez and Fuentes-Perdomo, 2019), the mission of benefiting the community (Gorenflo, 2015; Spieth et al., 2019), prioritizing social benefit over profit, promoting democratic decision-making, and restricting private appropriation of results (Olsi, 2013).

The concept of platform cooperativism serves as one meeting point between a social economy and a collaborative economy (Zale, 2016), promoting participatory decision-making and collective heritage (Gansky, 2014). Some collaborative companies align with the principles of the social economy by striving to benefit many and reduce inequalities, emphasizing community involvement and trust (Gorenflo, 2015). These companies extend the scope of the collaborative economy beyond digital platforms to include local exchanges and collaborations (Bauwens, 2014; Richardson, 2015; Stokes et al., 2014).

Collaborative and social companies should prioritize highlighting the positive impacts of their activities and ensure alignment with social objectives. It is crucial for these companies to strike a balance between participative governance, efficiency, and sustainability (Gorenflo, 2015), while simultaneously working towards achieving their social goals (Conaty and Bollier, 2014; Sundararajan, 2016). Considering this, the previous investigation put forth a definition of Social Collaborative Companies (henceforth SCCs) to comprehend how these entities integrate both collaborative and social aspects.

Furthermore, the Quality Model for SCCs consists of various dimensions covering essential aspects such as management control, social purpose definition and communication, leadership, democratic decision-making process, operational efficiency,

customer satisfaction, social impact measurement, and continuous improvement. The requirements of this model are generic and applicable to any kind of enterprise regardless of its activity (business sector) or size.

The primary objective of the Quality Model for SCCs is to provide a comprehensive guide that enables these companies to deliver products and services of the highest quality. This ensures not only the satisfaction and growth of their clients (Kim, 2019), but also the long-term sustainability of the company itself (Markides and Sosa, 2013). Moreover, the utilization of the Quality Model allows SCCs to gain a deeper understanding of their own operations, which is particularly valuable considering the intricate nature of the collaborative economy for companies with a social mission (Mas-Machuca et al., 2017) and democratic governance structure. Since the Quality Model for SCCs was proposed, it has subsequently been validated using grounded theory (Gioia Methodology) with the help of a group of experts in the article "A Quality Model for Social Collaborative Companies. A Validation Based on Gioia Methodology" (2023).

The objectives of this paper are: (a) to establish criteria regarding how to identify SCCs according to the definition presented in previous research; (b) to develop a comprehensive methodology for implementing the Quality Model for SCCs, with a practical and structured approach to enable SCCs to fulfil their social mission while meeting the expectations of their stakeholders, to integrate the Quality Model in operations, and foster continuous improvement within SCCs by providing a framework for monitoring and evaluating quality; and (c) to apply the Quality Model for SCCs in a social car-sharing company, Som Mobilitat, located in Barcelona, Spain to evaluate the impact of implementing the quality model in the company's overall performance.

## 4.2. Literature review

In this paper the collaborative economy definition to be used is as a business model where it has three actors: platform providers, service or product providers, and clients who seek assets and consumers (Barnes and Mattsson, 2016; Benoit et al., 2017; Ert et al., 2015). Other authors also prefer to use the term "collaborative economy" (Murillo et al., 2017), because it is the most established term among defenders and critics, as it

does not show the ethical issues that the shared economy presents and it is not limited to a particular type of activity such as access or the on-demand economy, which exclude some of the largest platforms (Codagnone et al., 2016).

The collaborative economy has experienced significant growth as an alternative to the traditional economy for different reasons, including: the potential of scalability (Botsman and Rogers, 2010), increased efficiency due to people having better access and being able to make better use of the resources (Muñoz and Cohen, 2018), and reduced cost for customers using the platform (Barnes and Mattsson, 2016), while customers have the opportunity to enjoy goods without the responsibility or work required in having to buy them (Belk, 2014).

All these reasons that have enabled the growth of the collaborative economy are overshadowed by some ethical aspects as mentioned above. These include the lack of distribution of wealth, the precarious working conditions of the new jobs that are created in this area (Sundararajan, 2016), and the lack of a legal labor and fiscal regulatory framework (Scholz, 2019), and in view of this situation it is worth asking whether it is possible to reformulate the collaborative economy to include a social perspective (Botsman and Rogers, 2010) and thus develop an activity wherein the best of both sides converge (Olsi, 2013) and the development of quality products and services can be guaranteed, thereby allowing this type of company to prevail over time.

#### *4.2.1. Quality models for collaborative companies*

In recent years, there has been growing interest in developing quality management models for service-oriented companies to ensure high-quality delivery and customer satisfaction. These models provide a framework for assessing and improving service quality, enabling companies to identify areas for improvement and make necessary changes. Several quality management models have been developed for this purpose, including the European Quality in Social Services (EQUASS) model, the Service Quality (SERVQUAL) model, the European Foundation for Quality (EFQM) model, and the Sustainable Service Quality (SSQ) model, among others.

The EQUASS model is a quality management system that has been widely used in the European service sector to assess and improve the quality of services in different sectors (Calvo-Mora et al., 2018). This model emphasizes the importance of customer-centred services, continuous improvement, and stakeholders' involvement in the quality management process (Melão et al., 2019).

The Service Quality (SERVQUAL) model, on the other hand, measures service quality by assessing the gap between customer expectations and perceptions (Parasuraman et al., 1985). This model emphasizes the importance of customer focus, leadership, and continuous improvement in various industries (Qadri, 2015).

In addition, there are other comprehensive quality management models like the EFQM, which has been widely adopted by European service organizations (Laurett and Mendes, 2019). Furthermore, the Sustainable Service Quality (SSQ) model integrates sustainability principles into the existing SERVQUAL model (Salleh et al., 2019).

In the context of a collaborative economy and collaborative companies, there have been several studies on the quality of services provided by these types of organizations. For example, Botsman and Rogers (2010) explored the role of trust and reputation in the sharing economy and highlighted the importance of quality control measures to build trust and maintain a positive reputation. Similarly, Amat-Lefort et al. (2023) examined the determinants of quality in online platform-based sharing economy services and identified trust, satisfaction, and loyalty as key factors.

Moreover, there have been efforts to develop quality management models that are specifically tailored to a collaborative economy and collaborative companies. Hamenda (2018) and Muñoz and Cohen (2018) proposed a framework for quality management in collaborative innovation networks that incorporates both internal and external quality factors while also taking into account a social dimension (Fuster Morell and Espelt, 2018; Schor, 2016). Additionally, Amat-Lefort et al. (2020) developed a quality management framework for platform-based collaborative economy services that considers the unique characteristics of these services, such as peer-to-peer interactions and user-generated content. Also, a

Quality Model was proposed and validated for us in previous papers specifically tailored for SCCs (Moreno et al., 2021) since these companies possess unique characteristics as they operate under a collaborative business model with a social focus embedded in their mission, they adopt a democratic style of governance, regardless of whether they are cooperatives, and they operate within the collaborative environment facilitated by a platform.

Overall, these quality management models provide useful frameworks for service-oriented companies to ensure high-quality service delivery and customer satisfaction with a sense of a social perspective. However, there is a growing recognition of the importance of tailored quality management models in the context of a collaborative economy and collaborative companies. Studies by Akhmedova et al. (2021), Breidbach and Brodie (2017), Laukkanen and Tura (2020), and Sutherland and Jarrahi (2018) emphasize the need to undertake further research to explore the practical application of quality management models in different companies even social companies or with social elements. However, the effectiveness of these models depends on how they are implemented and integrated into the company's culture and operations.

#### *4.2.2. Car sharing case studies*

Car sharing has gained prominence as a form of collaborative economy, offering an alternative to traditional car ownership, and presenting various social, economic, and environmental advantages (Botsman and Rogers, 2010). Several case studies have been conducted to explore the implementation and impact of car-sharing initiatives, providing valuable insights into practices, challenges, and outcomes in different contexts.

One study by Teles et al. (2018) focused on the sustainability impact of car-sharing business models, specifically examining two electric car-sharing projects. Through a systematic literature review, the authors identified key outcomes, including income development, and increased environmental awareness. The study emphasizes the importance of product-service system (PSS) models in promoting sustainability within business models.

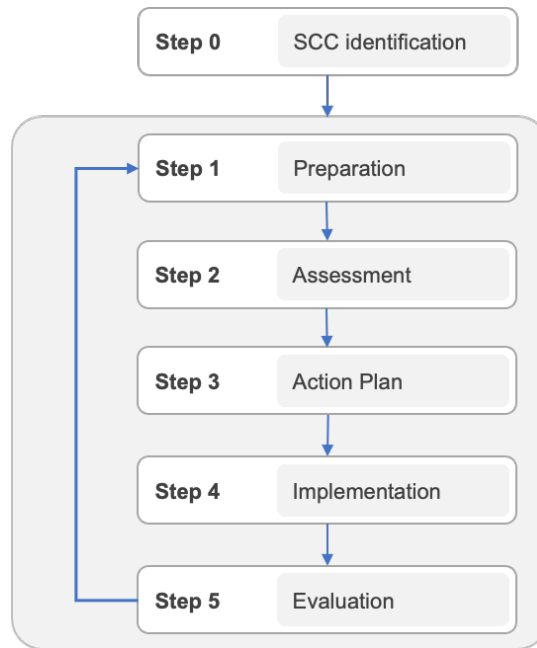
Other studies have investigated the environmental effects of car sharing. Amatuni et al. (2020), Firnkorn and Müller (2011), and Nijland and van Meerkerk (2017) conducted research utilizing surveys and literature reviews to analyse the impact of car sharing on emissions reduction and rebound effects. These studies examined car-sharing companies like Zipcar, Car2Go, Vamo, and Emotive, assessing their environmental impact across different countries such as Brazil, Germany, and the Netherlands over various time periods.

The aforementioned case studies shed light on the variety of car-sharing models, governance structures, and operational practices present in the sharing economy. This diversity underscores the importance of applying the Quality Model for SCCs with a systematic approach, as it can provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with car-sharing initiatives. By examining the experiences and outcomes of car-sharing initiatives, valuable insights can be gleaned regarding the operational, managerial, and quality-related aspects that play a pivotal role in the success of SCCs.

### **4.3. Methodology**

The research methodology proposed in this study is primarily descriptive explanatory in nature. Its objective is to outline the stages necessary for implementing the Quality Model for SCCs. This approach enables a deeper understanding of specific areas of interest by facilitating the characterization, elaboration, and identification of essential or significant factors that should be considered (Elman et al., 2020).

The implementation of the Quality Model for SCCs requires a systematic approach that involves careful planning, execution, and the collection of information through various methods. These methods include conducting interviews with members of senior management, directly observing facilities and engaging with employees, as well as consulting organizational documents such as publicly available information, internal company documents, and written material produced during the process. This encompasses objectives, indicators, monitoring reports, and more. Figure 10 presents the methodology's necessary steps for successfully implementing the Quality Model for SCC:



*Figure 10. Methodology to implement the Quality Management Model for SCCs*

**Step 0. SCC identification:** The Quality Model proposed in this study is specifically designed for SCCs based on the definition provided in the article “On the Convergence of Collaborative and Social Economy. A Quality Model for the combined effects” (Moreno et al., 2021): “A social collaborative company is a private organization that is dedicated to promoting the exchange between people to sell or share products and/or services through a digital platform (website or app), for profit or not, whose explicit purpose with respect to its activity is to have a positive impact on the community.

The company places the importance of the person before capital, with management decision-making processes being undertaken in a democratic way among its partners. It uses the outcome of economic performance (surplus) for the economic benefit of those who contribute to creating value and for the sustainable development of the company.”

To objectively identify whether a company qualifies as an SCC, an instrument has been developed. This instrument reviews 16 characteristics categorized into four main aspects: a) economic and business characteristics; b) social characteristics; c) governance characteristics; and d) business model characteristics. Each feature is evaluated on a scale of 1 to 3, where 1 indicates "does not meet the optional requirement", 2 indicates "partially meets the feature", and 3 indicates "completely



meets the feature". However, certain features are mandatory and must be scored 3. A company is considered an SCC if the final evaluation score exceeds 30 points.

It is important to note that, as stated in the definition of SCCs, the following exclusions apply: G2G (Government-to-Government) companies where public bodies interact through the platform, even if they have an explicit objective of benefiting society, companies that have been inactive for the past three years, companies whose activities do not involve exchange in legal tender, and companies that do not meet any of the mandatory characteristics considered.

The SCCs evaluation questionnaire is presented in Table 8.

**Table 8.** SCCs evaluation questionnaire

Characteristic to be evaluated		Requirement type	Result (1-3)
<b>a) Economics and business characteristics</b>	Company produces goods and/or services with a positive economic return, regardless of the size of the business or the turnover volume.	Optional	
	Company has workers paid in the maximum amount possible.	Optional	
	The well-being of partners, suppliers, and customers is pursued at the same level as the economic benefit.	<i>Mandatory</i>	
	Company capital is private from a group of individuals from civil society or a foundation within the framework of what is established in the law of the country where the activity is carried out.	<i>Mandatory</i>	
	Company carries out its activity in any country in Europe or the United States of America.	Optional	
<b>b) Social characteristics</b>	Company has an explicit objective of benefiting the community (principles of solidarity and responsibility).	<i>Mandatory</i>	
	Company comes from a private initiative, created by a group of individuals or civil society organizations.	Optional	
	Company distributes its surpluses to people and reserves profits for the development of the activity or for the allocation of social goods.	Optional	
<b>c) Governance characteristics</b>	The governing body is made up of the partners of the company or their representatives.	Optional	
	Decisions are made based on people and their work and/or service contributions or based on the social purpose.	<i>Mandatory</i>	

Characteristic to be evaluated		Requirement type	Result (1-3)
	The partners enjoy a high degree of autonomy; there is no more than 33% of the shareholding concentrated in a single shareholder.	<i>Mandatory</i>	
	Decision-making seeks to involve all stakeholders.	Optional	
	Partners have equal rights and duties.	Optional	
<b>d) Business model characteristics</b>	Economic activity is an exchange of goods and/or services between companies and/or individuals through a platform (web page, app, etc.).	<i>Mandatory</i>	
	The activity is legal.	<i>Mandatory</i>	
	The activity can be for profit or not.	Optional	
<b>Total</b>			

Evaluation scale:	
1	Does not meet the optional feature
2	Partially meets the feature
3	Completely meets the feature (requested for all "Mandatory" features)

**Step 1. Preparation:** After characterizing the SCC, the implementation process commences with thorough planning and preparation. It is crucial to establish a dedicated project team and define the scope of the implementation. The project team should comprise members from various areas of the organization, including management, operations, and quality assurance. Together, they collaboratively develop an implementation plan that outlines the key activities, timelines, and responsibilities for each stage of the implementation process. The scope of the implementation should encompass all pertinent processes - an activity associated with SCC includes all relevant processes and activities related to SCC operations.

**Step 2. Assessment:** This phase involves gaining an understanding of the current state of the SCC by utilizing the questionnaire derived from the validated Quality Model for SCCs described in the article "A Quality Model for Social Collaborative Companies. A validation based on Gioia Methodology" (2023). This questionnaire, presented in Table 2, encompasses the primary criteria established in the Quality Model for SCCs. It consists of 31 statements that need to be evaluated using three options: fulfilment, partial fulfilment, or unfulfilment.

By employing this questionnaire, the assessment is aimed at comprehensively evaluating the SCC against the established criteria, providing insights into the extent to which the SCC meets the defined quality standards. Each statement is carefully reviewed, and the appropriate response option is selected based on the SCC's adherence to the specific criterion.

**Table 10.** Quality Model for SCC. Considerations for Assessment

Statements	Result
<b>Dimension: Management</b>	
<b>Sub-category: Strategy</b>	
1	The company has a vision and social mission statement with a clear social propose clearly defined. These statements are public and known to all stakeholders
2	The company has identified all stakeholders and their needs. This reflection is made by top management and reviewed at least once a year
3	The company has a concrete strategic plan which explains how the social mission and vision will be achieved. This Strategic Plan is reviewed at least once a year
4	Company considers the economic sustainability that guarantees the survival of the business and all the parties involved, even if the company is a non-profit business
<b>Sub-category: Leadership</b>	
5	Top management has defined the values, including the social mission within the collaboration and participation environment
6	The leadership performance is evaluated at least once a year (based on the observable behaviors) with specific and objectives tools given that the purpose of this is to reinforce their capacities
7	Leadership role model is considered in the job definitions and in the hiring process for all job positions
<b>Sub-category: Social Management</b>	
8	The company activity can be considered to have a positive impact in society including the wellbeing of the people related
9	The company perform a Context Analysis considering the critical topics that can influence in the main activities, such as: environment, compliance, public administration, stakeholders, leadership, communications, brand, etc. Context Analysis must be updated and communicate with a frequency that adjusts to changes in the business environment of the company
10	Context Analysis is an input for the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan is reviewed and updated at least once a year

Statements	Result
<b>Sub-category: <u>Governance</u></b>	
11 The company has a democratic style of governance, where one person equals to one vote	
12 The company has defined a concrete strategy to assure efficient decision-making process oriented to guarantee not only democracy, but also decentralized decision-making process in most cases whenever possible	
13 The company has written rules and procedures to guarantee the transparency about the information related to decision-making.	
<b>Dimension: Operations</b>	
<b>Sub-category: <u>Provider of products and / or services</u></b>	
14 The company has a process map that includes the customer, providers and platform activities and processes and the interaction between them	
15 There is a quality control established in each point of change of responsibility (i.e., provider to customer, customer to other customer, etc.) according to the defined processes	
16 The company has clear aspects such as operational capacity, cost structure, customer requirements, platform operation, on time delivery, ethical code, etc.	
17 Company gives preference to suppliers with a social purpose, to promote them and expand their network of action considering the common good	
<b>Sub-category: <u>Platform</u></b>	
18 The company ensures that it knows the requirements of customers regarding the platform and that the company must define in proper detail all the requirements about the platform	
19 The company has a system to evaluate the platform performance. This system is periodic and provide objective information on a regular basis. All these results are discussed on a strategic level	
20 If the company has an external platform provider, the company ensures that they have an adequate control over this, that includes a legal agreement about key points	
21 The company ensures that it adequately communicates the client's requirements regarding the platform, and that the platform is really in charge of facilitating contact between supplier and client	

Statements	Result
22 The company must guarantee the ethics in data management, assurance the privacy of the customers' personal data, the adequate availability of data for handling customers claims, and potential legal claims	
<b>Sub-category:</b> <u>Customers</u>	
23 The company is responsible for the definition and communication of the client's expectations regarding the product /service and the platform that acts as an intermediary	
24 The company has a system to evaluate the customer satisfaction and to record relevant information when they are part of the operations, encouraging the customer to evaluate the product and/or service and to share them. The results are discussed in a strategic level	
25 The company encourages consumers to report on conditions of the shared products after completion of the usage (Ex: with monetary rewards, discounts, points, etc.)	
26 The company identifies good practices in a periodical way and manages this information on a strategic level	
<b>Dimension: Continuous improvement</b>	
<b>Sub-category:</b> <u>Key performance indicators</u>	
27 The company ensures its abilities to establish key indicators to analyze operational results, financial results, customer satisfaction results, and social results and can have an adequate and efficient management vision and control	
28 The company establishes robust data capturing systems and defining key indicators properly	
<b>Sub-category:</b> <u>Data analysis</u>	
29 The company analyses the data with proper tools for needs. This data analysis allows models and predictions to be made that allow for more information about the future	
<b>Sub-category:</b> <u>Actions plans</u>	
30 The analysis of non-financial indicators is also considered; that is, the organization carries out an analysis, allowing the needs of stakeholders, changes in market players to be possibly made, and for technological innovations and other changes in the environment that may affect it	
31 The company establishes concrete and sufficient resources to develop the continuous improvement actions	

To conduct the assessment, the evaluator should possess a combination of technical knowledge and practical experience in the areas of quality management, collaborative consumption, and social and environmental impact assessment. They should also be familiar with the specific characteristics and challenges of SCCs, such as their decentralized nature, the diverse stakeholders, and the need to balance economic, social, and environmental considerations.

In addition to technical expertise, the evaluator should have strong communication and interpersonal skills to facilitate collaboration with the SCC's management team and other stakeholders. Effective verbal and written communication are essential for presenting findings and recommendations in a clear and actionable manner. Furthermore, the evaluator should uphold ethical conduct and social responsibility as they assess the SCC's compliance with the Quality Model and its impact on society and the environment. They should have a good understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to SCCs to evaluate compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

Ideally, the evaluator should be independent from the organization being evaluated to provide objectivity and guide the assessment process. They should be a well-rounded professional capable of conducting a rigorous and constructive evaluation of the implementation of the Quality Model for SCCs.

During the assessment process, information can be gathered through various methods, such as examining the company's website, reviewing public documents, conducting interviews with management and employees from different departments, and engaging in co-creation sessions with the work team, etc. Also, confidentiality of information must be ensured in the assessment process.

**Step 3. Action Plan:** Based on the assessment results, the project team should develop a comprehensive action plan to address the identified gaps or areas for improvement. The action plan should prioritize the potential impact and feasibility of each action, taking into consideration factors such as urgency, the resources required, and alignment with the strategic goals.

The action plan should include specific tasks and timelines, and clearly define the individuals or teams responsible for implementing and monitoring the actions. This



ensures clear ownership and accountability throughout the process. Each task should have a defined timeline to guide the implementation and enable the tracking of progress.

In addition, it is crucial to allocate appropriate resources, including personnel, budget, and technology, to support the implementation of the action plan. Each task should have a defined timeline to guide the implementation and the mechanisms to monitor the progress: for example, regular progress reviews, periodic assessments, and performance measurements to evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented actions. Finally, it is necessary to highlight the importance of communication and stakeholder engagement throughout the implementation of the action plan, and to define regular communication channels (progress reports, meetings, and updates) to keep stakeholders informed about the progress, outcomes, and potential impacts of the actions to be implemented.

**Step 4. Implementation:** This encompasses the execution of the action plan. It begins with effective communication and stakeholders' engagement. This involves conducting meetings, workshops, and training sessions to ensure a shared understanding of the implementation objectives, processes, and expected outcomes. After this, resource allocation is required to ensure smooth execution of the action plan, as well as addressing the change management strategies employed to facilitate a smooth transition that includes identifying potential resistance points and developing strategies to mitigate resistance and foster acceptance of the changes.

**Step 5. Evaluation:** Once the implementation is complete, an evaluation should be conducted to determine the effectiveness of the actions put in place mainly based on the implications of the results attained. The evaluation should also include an assessment of the impact of the implementation on the Quality Model for SCCs, on the general performance, and especially on the SCC operations.

Finally, the Quality Model for SCCs requires the development of a continuous improvement plan to ensure that it is sustained over time. The plan should include ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the SCC's performance and regular updates of the Quality Model's requirements to ensure that it remains relevant to the SCC's needs.

#### 4.4. Application of the Quality Model to Som Mobilitat

Som Mobilitat is a non-profit cooperative that was established in Barcelona, Spain, in 2016. It operates in accordance with the regulations outlined in Law 12/2015 of July 9 on Cooperatives of Catalonia. Currently, Som Mobilitat boasts a membership of 2,579 individuals as of 2022, and it operates a fleet of 66 vehicles across 38 municipalities. The cooperative is affiliated with REScoop, a European Federation that brings together more than 1,500 renewable energy cooperatives. It is also a member of The Mobility Factory (TMF), a second-degree European cooperative based in Brussels that focuses on providing technological services for mobility. In addition, Som Mobilitat has entered into an agreement with Partago, a Belgian electric vehicle cooperative, to share a technological platform and establish a second-tier entity responsible for governing and overseeing technological development. The cooperative collaborates with Ouishare, a global movement comprising individuals and entities dedicated to giving a social dimension to the sharing economy.

The primary mission of Som Mobilitat is to offer products and services to its members that accelerate the transition to sustainable mobility. The cooperative places emphasis on promoting initiatives and projects that contribute to making its members' mobility more environmentally friendly and sustainable, ultimately reducing the number of vehicles in urban areas. Its core activities involve designing, producing, and financing new technological products and services in the mobility sector, collaborating with other cooperatives, and facilitating the establishment of communities and new cooperatives beyond the region of Catalonia. Furthermore, Som Mobilitat actively engages with public entities to support sustainable transportation initiatives.

The primary economic activity of the cooperative revolves around providing an electric vehicle car-sharing service. Through a mobile application, cooperative members can access information about vehicle availability, locate the nearest vehicle, and make reservations. Members utilize the vehicles for their desired journeys and return them to designated areas within specified time frames. Afterwards, members are encouraged to provide feedback through a service assessment questionnaire and engage in a community chat to share their experiences. The service fees cover parking, mileage (up to 30 km/hr), energy, insurance, and maintenance. As of 2022, the company records an average of 2,000 monthly reservations, with the majority occurring during the spring

and autumn seasons. The cumulative distance travelled since the commencement of operations has exceeded one million kilometres.

However, to apply the Quality Model for SCCs in the Som Mobilitat company, steps 0 to 3 described the methodology to follow, i.e. SCC identification, assessment, and an action plan. The implementation and evaluation have been left in the hands of the management of the company who make the final decisions regarding the resources, time, and technology involved. For this, data collection was based on consultation of the information available on the web, documentation of the assembly of members, and interviews with the management. Data were collected from January to May 2023, and combined qualitative and visual analysis of data.

Starting with Step 0: SCC identification, the SCC questionnaire was completed after analyzing the available information about Som Mobilitat, and the results produced a total score of 44 points, indicating compliance with all mandatory aspects. Therefore, based on this evaluation, Som Mobilitat can be classified as a SCC, given that it stands out as a company that offers services with a positive economic return. Its financial performance has demonstrated consistent gains in recent exercises, reflecting its ability to generate sustainable and profitable operations. Furthermore, the company's geographical focus is primarily on Europe, with a particular emphasis on Spain, where it has established a strong presence.

One defining characteristic of Som Mobilitat is its origin as a private initiative driven by a group of individuals. The company was founded with the aim of addressing the challenges of sustainable mobility and reducing the environmental impact of transportation. This grassroots approach highlights the collaborative and community-driven nature of Som Mobilitat's operations.

In terms of governance, Som Mobilitat follows a participatory model where the decision-making process involves its members or their representatives. This ensures a democratic and inclusive approach to organizational governance, enabling the active involvement of stakeholders in shaping the company's direction and policies.

Overall, the evaluation results confirm that Som Mobilitat aligns with the key criteria outlined in the Quality Model for SCCs. The company's commitment to economic viability,

sustainable practices, and collaborative governance reflects its dedication to fostering a more sustainable and socially responsible approach to mobility.

After characterizing Som Mobilitat as an SCC, the implementation process begins with planning and preparation (Step 1: Preparation). A dedicated project team of four people was established, representing different areas of expertise within the organization, including: mobility projects, member services, strategy, and operations. This diverse team ensured a comprehensive approach to the implementation process.

The project team played a crucial role in providing the necessary information for the assessment, offering insights and data from their respective areas of responsibility. Their collaborative efforts ensured that a holistic view of the Som Mobilitat operations and requirements was considered during the implementation phase.

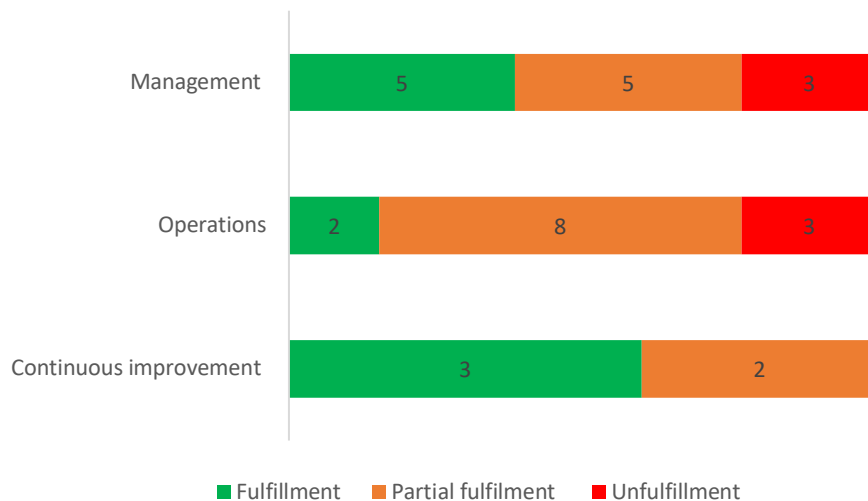
The scope of the implementation was focused specifically on the car-sharing activities offered by Som Mobilitat. This ensured that the assessment and the action plan would address the related specific needs and challenges involved. The proposed timeline for the implementation process was set at six months from Step 0 to Step 3 starting from January 2023, with the remaining steps depending on the specific dates involved in the action plan developed. This time frame provided a reasonable and structured approach for executing the necessary activities and achieving the desired outcomes.

To conduct the assessment (Step 2: Assessment), the considerations was applied to gathering data and insights regarding Som Mobilitat's management, operations, and continuous improvement (Quality Model dimensions). The assessment focused on evaluating the company's adherence to the key criteria outlined in the Quality Model for SCCs (Table 2) using a fulfilment scale (fulfilment, partial fulfilment, or unfulfilment).

Experienced authors with knowledge in quality management, collaborative consumption, and social and environmental impact assessment were engaged to carry out the assessment. Various methods were employed, including interviews, direct observation, and analysis of organizational documents. To ensure the confidentiality of sensitive information, data were primarily gathered from public available sources such as Som Mobilitat's website and other shared materials.

In terms of the results on adherence to the key criteria of the Quality Model for SCCs, the assessment focused on its three dimensions: management, operations, and continuous improvement. Here are the findings for each one (Figure 11):

- i. *Management dimension:* Out of a total of 13 statements, five were assessed as fulfilling the criteria (statements: 1, 3, 4, 5 and 8), five as partially fulfilling them (statements: 2, 9, 10, 11 and 12), and three indicated that they were unfulfilled (statements 6, 7, and 13).
- ii. *Operations dimension:* Out of a total of 13 statements, two were assessed as fulfilling the criteria (statements: 17 and 23), eight as partially fulfilling them (statements: 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22 and 24), and three indicated that they were unfulfilled (statements: 19, 25 and 26).
- iii. *Continuous Improvement dimension:* Out of a total of five statements, three were assessed as fulfilling the criteria (statements: 27, 30 and 31), two as partially fulfilling them (statements: 28 and 29), and none indicated that they were unfulfilled.



*Figure 11. Adherence to the key criteria of the Quality Model for SCCs. Som Mobilitat results*

Now, based on the comprehensive assessment conducted, the following gaps were identified (Table 9):

**Table 9.** Gaps identified in the Quality Model for SCC assessment.

Statement of Quality Model for SCC		Result	Gaps identified
2	Company has identified all stakeholders and their needs. This reflection is made by top management and reviewed at least once a year.	Partial fulfilment	It is necessary to analyze the environment of the company and explicitly identify the stakeholders.
6	The leadership performance is evaluated at least once a year (based on the observable behaviors) with specific and objective tools given that the purpose of this is to reinforce their capacities.	Unfulfillment	There is no performance evaluation of leadership positions based on objective criteria and aligned with the company's mission and strategy.
7	Leadership role model is considered in the job definitions and in the hiring process for all job positions.	Unfulfillment	It is necessary to review the organization and explicitly define the jobs, including the training and skills required.
9	Company performs a context analysis considering the critical topics that can have an influence in the main activities, such as: environment, compliance, public administration, stakeholders, leadership, communications, brand, etc. Context analysis must be updated and communicated with a frequency that adjusts to changes in the business environment of the company.	Partial fulfilment	Annual work plan considers partially the stakeholders' needs, but there is not a complete or formal context analysis. A complete context analysis must be done.
10	Context analysis is an input for the strategic plan. The Strategic Plan is reviewed and updated at least once a year.	Partial fulfilment	The context analysis must be another important input for the annual work plan (strategic plan).
11	Company has a democratic style of governance, where one person equals one vote.	Partial fulfilment	One person is equal to one vote, however the mechanism for decision-making must ensure a high level of participation (decentralization).
13	Company has written rules and procedures to guarantee transparency of the information related to decision-making.	Unfulfillment	The company should have written rules and procedures to guarantee transparency in the decision-making process.
14	Company has a process map that includes the customer, providers, and platform activities and processes and the interaction between them.	Partial fulfilment	Company does not have a complete process map.
15	There is quality control established at each point of change of responsibility (i.e. provider to customer, customer to other customer, etc.) according to the defined processes.	Partial fulfilment	Company needs to establish a quality control plan to ensure the quality of the whole process including at each point of change of responsibility (i.e. provider to customer, customer to other customer, etc.) according to the defined processes.

Statement of Quality Model for SCC		Result	Gaps identified
16	Company has clear aspects such as operational capacity, cost structure, customer requirements, KPIs, platform operation, on-time delivery, ethical code, etc.	Partial fulfilment	ERP is cooperative, so it is important to ensure that it is suitable for specific needs of Som Mobilitat's operations.
18	Company ensures that it knows the requirements of customers regarding the platform, and it must define in proper detail all the requirements regarding the platform.	Partial fulfilment	A statement of work about platform features and capabilities must be written and updated.
19	Company has a system to evaluate the platform performance. This system is periodic and objective and provides objective information on a regular basis. All these results are discussed on a strategic level.	Unfulfillment	Platform performance must be evaluated periodically, and action must be taken to improve in this regard.
20	If the company has an external platform provider, the company ensures that it has adequate control over this, including a legal agreement about key points.	Partial fulfilment	Legal agreement with platform's provider must be reviewed and updated (if applicable).
22	Company must guarantee the ethics in data management, ensuring the privacy of the customers' personal data, and adequate availability of data for handling customers' claims and potential legal claims.	Partial fulfilment	Data management policy and procedures must be reviewed and updated (if applicable).
25	Company encourages consumers to report on conditions of shared products after usage (e.g. with monetary rewards, discounts, points, etc.).	Unfulfillment	Company must put in place a system to encourage customers to evaluate the complete car-sharing service (e.g. monetary rewards, points, etc.).
26	Company identifies good practices periodically and manages this information on a strategic level.	Unfulfillment	Company must identify best practices of other cooperatives in Europe.
28	Company establishes robust data-capturing systems and defines key indicators properly.	Partial fulfilment	Data capture system and associated KPIs must be updated periodically to know the real company performance.
29	Company analyses the data with proper tools for needs. This data analysis allows models and predictions to be made that allow for more information about the future.	Partial fulfilment	Company must use data to make decisions and to predict future tendencies.

Based on the identified gaps, some action plans were proposed for Som Mobilitat:

i. Stakeholder Analysis and Engagement:

- Conduct a thorough analysis of the company's environment to identify all relevant stakeholders.
- Implement mechanisms for gathering feedback and addressing the needs and expectations of stakeholders.

ii. Leadership Performance Evaluation:

- Establish a formal performance evaluation system for leadership positions based on objective criteria aligned with the company's mission and strategy.
- Define key performance indicators (KPIs) and assessment methods to evaluate leadership performance.
- Provide training and development opportunities to enhance leadership capacities based on evaluation results.

iii. Job Definition and Skills Training:

- Review and refine job descriptions for all positions within the organization to ensure clarity and alignment with organizational goals.
- Identify the required skills and competencies for each role and develop training programmes to address any skill gaps.
- Regularly assess and update job descriptions and training programmes to accommodate evolving needs and industry trends.

iv. Context Analysis and Annual Work Plan:

- Conduct a comprehensive and formal Context Analysis to identify critical topics that may influence the company's operations.



- Incorporate the findings of the context analysis into the annual work plan, ensuring that they reflect the current business environment.
  - Align strategic goals and objectives with the identified contextual factors to enhance decision-making and resource allocation.
- v. Decision-Making Mechanism:
- Implement mechanisms to facilitate decentralized decision-making and encourage active participation from all members.
  - Enhance transparency and accountability in the decision-making process by documenting rules and procedures.
  - Utilize digital tools and platforms to facilitate communication, collaboration, and voting among members.
- vi. Process Mapping and Quality Control:
- Develop a comprehensive process map that outlines all key processes and activities within the organization.
  - Implement a Quality Control Plan to ensure consistent quality throughout the entire service delivery process.
  - Establish checkpoints and measures to monitor and improve quality at each point of responsibility transfer.
- vii. Platform Evaluation and Management:
- Regularly evaluate the performance of the cooperative's platform and identify areas for improvement.
  - Update and refine the Statement of Work (SoW) to accurately capture platform features and capabilities.
  - Review legal agreements with the platform provider to ensure they align with the cooperative's needs and objectives.

viii. Data Management and Analysis:

- Develop and update data management policies and procedures to ensure the security and privacy of customer information.
- Establish a system for collecting and analyzing relevant data to inform decision-making and identify future trends.
- Utilize data-driven insights to improve operational efficiency, enhance customer experience, and drive business growth.

ix. Customer Service Enhancement:

- Implement measures to encourage customers to provide feedback on their complete car-sharing experience.
- Explore incentive programmes, such as monetary rewards or loyalty points, to motivate customers to evaluate the service.
- Use customer feedback to identify areas for improvement and implement strategies to enhance customer satisfaction.

x. Best Practice Benchmarking:

- Research and analyze best practices from other successful cooperatives in Europe.
- Identify key strategies and approaches that align with Som Mobilitat's objectives and implement relevant practices within the organization.
- Foster knowledge sharing and collaboration among cooperatives to exchange insights and experiences.

xi. Data System Enhancement:

- Continuously update and refine the data capture system and associated key performance indicators (KPIs).

- Regularly monitor and assess the company's performance based on the captured data.
- Utilize data analytics tools and techniques to gain actionable insights and make informed decisions.

xii. Future-oriented Decision Making:

- Foster a culture of utilizing data and predictive analytics to anticipate future trends and make proactive.

The actions identified previously must be thoroughly analysed by the designated team (Step 1), taking not consideration their potential impact and feasibility. The prioritization of actions will ensure a systematic and efficient approach to addressing the identified gaps. Each action will be assigned a specific task, along with a clearly defined timeline and responsibility. This assignment will facilitate effective execution and accountability throughout the implementation process. Furthermore, it is necessary that the proposed actions undergo the approval process by the General Assembly. Once approved, the actions will be incorporated into the annual work plan, aligning the organization's strategic objectives with the identified gaps and the proposed solutions.

#### **4.5. Conclusions**

This paper proposed a methodology for implementing the Quality Model for SCCs using a descriptive explanatory approach to gain a deeper understanding of specific areas of interest related to SCCs. The methodology consists of five steps: SCC identification, preparation, assessment, action plan, and implementation.

A case study was conducted in Som Mobilitat, a company that offers mobility solutions, particularly a car-sharing service. In this case study the implementation of the Quality Model for SCCs was covered from the preparation to action plan proposal stages. The proposed actions, based on identified gaps, had implications for the company's strategy, resources, timelines, and internal functioning beyond the scope of academic research.

By implementing the model, SCCs can establish effective management practices, define and communicate their social purpose, demonstrate strong leadership qualities, engage in an inclusive decision-making process, optimize their operational efficiency, prioritize customer satisfaction, measure and assess their social impact, and continuously strive for improvement. The model provides a structured approach to enhance overall performance and meet stakeholder expectations.

This investigation opens up avenues for further research, such as continued implementation and follow-ups in the short, medium, and long term. These follow-ups aim to study the applicability of the model and the main advantages and disadvantages of implementing the proposed actions or following the methodology. Additionally, the model can be applied to multiple SCCs in the same sector, such as car sharing or cooperatives, to study sector behaviours, enhance performance, identify best practices that can be shared with similar companies, and ensure consistent delivery of high-quality products and services while upholding the social mission and democratic values.

## Chapter 5

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# **Thesis conclusions**

## **5. Chapter 5. Thesis conclusions.**

### **5.1. Main findings of this dissertation**

The genesis of this dissertation stems from a discerning observation of the exponential growth within the collaborative economy (Vaughan & Daverio, 2016; Ertz & Leblanc-Proulx, 2018; Sun & Ertz, 2021), showcasing both its merits, such as wealth generation and enhanced accessibility to goods and services, and its inherent drawbacks, including skewed wealth distribution, suboptimal labor conditions, and regulatory voids across diverse jurisdictions (Smorto, 2018 & Gyimóthy et al., 2020). In response to this complex reality, a cadre of collaborative companies has emerged, driven by a resolute commitment to harnessing the positive facets of the collaborative economy while mitigating its detrimental aspects (Ertz & Leblanc-Proulx, 2018). These entities stand as beacons of a proactive shift, diligently striving to champion the welfare of all stakeholders alongside economic prosperity, with some carving specialized niches such as platform cooperatives (Zhu & Marjanovic, 2021; Sholz, 2018).

The aim of this research has been to establish a conceptual framework that delineates these distinctive entities within the realm of Social Collaboratives Companies (SCCs). By proposing this concept, a stride has been taken towards facilitating their identification, comprehension, and paving a pathway for future explorations. Additionally, the research advances with the proposition of a crafted quality management model tailored to these SCCs. This model is conceived to safeguard their economic longevity by ensconcing the delivery of goods and services of quality (Benoit et al., 2017; Akhmedova et al., 2020), all the while vigilantly upholding their social mission. Rooted in a comprehensive literature review, the model's viability and effectiveness are further ratified through its systematic validation, founded on the Gioia methodology.

Finally, to bring the theoretical into practical fruition, the dissertation culminates in a case study. This empirically grounded endeavor centers on the application of the proposed quality management model to an electric car rental company situated in Barcelona, Spain. This tangible application provides an exemplar of the model's

application and its potential to harmonize the dual objectives of economic sustainability and social impact.

In summary, the ensuing table 10 shows the alignment of the initially stated objectives with the corresponding research pursuits, succinctly showing the seminal findings and contributions.

**Table 10.** Initial objectives and how they have been responded.

Objectives	Findings
<p><b>Chapter 2.</b> Social Collaborative Companies definition and Quality Management Model for Social Collaborative Companies proposal based in a literature review (Objective I and II)</p>	<p>After analysis of the attributes characterizing the social economy and the collaborative economy, while considering the shared and distinctive elements revealed through the literature review, certain key points emerge. Social companies, existing within the private sector, operate on democratic principles wherein partners enjoy equal rights and responsibilities (Diaz-Foncea et al., 2016). These entities prioritize human well-being and organizational purpose over capital accumulation (Vinocur et al., 2018; Diaz-Foncea et al., 2016). Rooted in principles of solidarity and responsibility, social companies endeavour to exert a positive societal impact (García Montoro, 2016), allocating their surpluses toward objectives that contribute to their own sustainable growth.</p> <p>On the other hand, the collaborative economy necessitates the interaction of three pivotal actors: a platform provider, which can be a website or an application; providers of goods or services; and individuals seeking access to said offerings (Benoit et al., 2017; Barnes &amp; Mattsson, 2016). It is within this nexus of attributes that the concept of Social Collaborative Companies (SCCs) is introduced.</p>
<p><b>Quality Model for SCC proposal:</b> Identification of key theoretical frameworks and the most pertinent literature, culminating in the composition of a state-of-the-art overview and the preliminary Quality Management Model tailored for SCCs (Objective II).</p>	<p>The literature review of the models enables us to consider the most significant aspects included in the proposed model: EQUASS emphasizes leadership, results orientation, and continuous improvement (EQUASS, 2018). The Quality Service Model highlights the relationship between customer needs, expected service, and perceived service (Parasuraman, 1985). The Quality and Excellence Model consists of three components: direction, results, and execution, alongside organizational culture and leadership (EFQM, 2019). The Quality Model for collaborative companies introduces a cyclical approach involving continuous improvement and addressing service quality gaps (Amat-Lefort et al., 2020). Lastly, the Sharing Business Model Compass (Muñoz &amp; Cohen, 2018) encompasses platform type, technology, business approach, and governance model.</p>



Objectives	Findings
<b>Chapter 3.</b>	Quality Management Model for Social Collaborative Companies validation based in Gioia methodology (Objective III).
Identifying the key aspects of the Quality Model for SCC, through a declarative description within a questionnaire administered to an expert group.	A key aspect was identified, and based on this, a questionnaire comprising 28 statements for semi-structured interviews was developed. Consequently, the chosen methodology was Gioia's grounded theory (Gioia, 2021), employing a purposive sample (Sekaran, 2003) consisting of both academics and practitioners. Subsequently, the interviews were conducted via video conference with a final sample of 9 individuals, each representing diverse demographic profiles.
Analyzing the data gathered from the questionnaire using a grounded theory approach through Gioia methodology.	The data were arranged using data structure diagrams, categorized into first-order categories, second-order categories, and aggregate dimensions. These categories were aligned with the dimensions of the Quality Model for SCCs: management, operations, and continuous improvement. Furthermore, validation in terms of clarity, coherence, and relevance for each questionnaire statement was conducted with the same participants.
Assimilating the insights garnered during the validation process into the theoretical Quality Management Model for Social Collaborative Companies thereby enhancing and refining it toward the creation of a definitive version.	Drawing from the findings, the entirety of the Quality Model's wording was reviewed and subsequently subjected to minor modifications. Subsequent to this, the insights gleaned from the Gioia Methodology were incorporated to formulate the definitive iteration of the Quality Model for SCCs.

**Objectives**

**Findings**

**Chapter 4.**

Quality Management Model for Social Collaborative Companies application. Case studio to a social Electrical Car Sharing company (Objective IV).

Establish criteria for the identification of SCCs in alignment with the definition outlined in this research.

To determine the categorization of a company as an SCC, a systematic tool has been developed. This instrument evaluates 16 distinct attributes, systematically arranged into four principal dimensions: a) economic and operational attributes; b) social attributes; c) governance attributes; and d) business model attributes. Each attribute is evaluated on a scale that ranges from 1 to 3, wherein a score of 1 signifies "inadequate fulfillment of the characteristic," a score of 2 indicates "partial adherence to the characteristic," and a score of 3 conveys "complete adherence to the characteristic." Nevertheless, certain attributes bear obligatory significance and thereby necessitate a rating of 3. The determination of a company's classification as an SCCs hinge on whether the cumulative assessment score exceeds 30 points.

Formulate a comprehensive methodology for the seamless implementation of the quality management model within SCCs. This approach will pragmatically guide SCCs in fulfilling their social objectives while effectively addressing stakeholders' expectations. It will facilitate the integration of the model into operational strategies and cultivate an environment of continual improvement by furnishing a framework for quality monitoring and evaluation.

The outlined methodology comprises six sequential steps: SCC identification, preparation, assessment, action plan, implementation, and evaluation. Within the Assessment step, the questionnaire stemming from the validation of the Quality Model was employed to gauge the company's alignment with each facet of the Quality Model, employing a qualitative assessment framework categorized as Fulfillment, Partial Fulfillment, or Unfulfillment. Furthermore, the fundamental criteria for evaluators and the methods for information collection were stipulated. Subsequently, the attributes of the action plans, emanating from the obtained results, are presented, encompassing specific tasks, deadlines, and requisite resources. Additionally, the mechanism to oversee their execution is explicated. Finally, recommendations are made regarding the execution evaluation process, emphasizing knowledge acquisition, and perpetuating the ethos of continuous enhancement.

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**Objectives**

Apply the Quality Management Model for SCCs to a social Electrical Car Sharing company located in Barcelona, Spain. This application aims to assess the repercussions of integrating the quality management model on the company's holistic performance.

**Findings**

At Som Mobilitat, the applied steps encompassed stages 0 to 3, as delineated in the methodology. These stages encompass SCC identification, assessment, and action plan formulation. The subsequent stages of implementation and evaluation were entrusted to the company's management, given their authority in determining the allocation of economic resources, time, and technology. The questionnaire designed to assess the SCC classification yielded a total score of 44, fully meeting all mandatory criteria. As a consequence of the evaluation, certain gaps were discerned, prompting the proposal of corresponding actions.

The ambit of the implementation was specifically directed at the company's carsharing endeavors, underscoring that the assessment and action plan were tailored to address the unique exigencies and challenges intertwined therein. A designated timeline of six months was proposed for the implementation process, while the sequencing of the remaining steps would hinge on the specific dates enshrined within the developed action plans.

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## 5.2 Thesis conclusions and main contributions

Taken together, this research has made significant contributions by defined the conceptualization of SCCs, introducing a quality model to guide their operational excellence, validating their applicability through peer review, and demonstrating their tangible impact through implementation. These contributions are prepared to enrich the understanding, development and sustainability of SCCs, fostering a landscape where sharing economy principles combine harmoniously with social missions to create lasting social value. As SCCs continue to emerge and evolve, this research brings together stakeholders with valuable insights and tools for success, ultimately furthering the evolution of impactful and responsible business practices within the contemporary economic paradigm.

The conclusions and main contributions for each of the chapters are described below:

### *5.2.1 Chapter 2 conclusions and main contributions*

The concept of social enterprise as highlighted by recent studies (Berbegal-Mirabent et al., 2021) and is generating growing interest (Deforuny & Nyssens, 2010; Kraus et al., 2014) among academics and professionals (Kraus et al. , 2017). Many people have contributed to the conceptualization of the social economy, however beyond all the definitions that may exist for social enterprise (Borzaga & Defourny, 2001), a crucial point, particularly pertinent to this research, is that social enterprises pursue a social mission through their commercial activities, as emphasized by (Pache & Santos, 2010).

Now, looking at the collaborative economy, it becomes evident that it represents a rapidly expanding global phenomenon (Benoit et al., 2017), especially in accommodation and transportation services (Hamari et al., 2016; Hossain, 2020). This phenomenon often goes by various names, including gig economy, platform economy, among others. In the context of this research, to consider collaborative companies within the collaborative economy, and these are selected based on its elements: (a) a platform provider that facilitates the exchange, (b) a service provider, and (c) a customer seeking access to assets and consuming products (Barnes & Mattsson, 2016; Benoit et al., 2017).

Considering the previous, the aims of Chapter 2 were undertaking a thorough literature review to comprehend the landscape of collaborative and social enterprises, formulating a novel conceptualization for a social collaborative company (SCC), delving into how such entities navigate the interplay of these paradigms, and culminating in the proposal of a quality model tailored specifically for social collaborative companies. This model preliminary underwent validation by experts versed in both collaborative and social economy domains, with the overarching intent to provide actionable guidance, fostering sustainability through the provision of quality products and services.

As in the field of social economy, various authors have made efforts to contribute to the conceptualization of the collaborative economy, giving rise to the emergence of several similar concepts (Mont et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the sharing economy has grown, and concerns have been raised about its drawbacks, including regulatory challenges, lack of adequate worker protection, income inequality, as well as social and community unrest, among others (Morell, 2011). These issues have fueled efforts to find solutions rooted in a more socially oriented approach, exemplified by the concept of platform cooperativism (Scholz, 2017). Platform cooperativism represents a response that seeks to foster a more socially responsible understanding of collaborative companies, all within the framework of this specific business model.

In this study, through an examination of the existing literature on social enterprises and collaborative economies, a definition of SCCs (Social Collaborative Companies) has been reached. This concept has significant value as it allows these companies to delve deeper into their unique characteristics and, in the future, continue to advance knowledge in this field.

For the other hand, the literature review revealed a glaring gap that has been addressed by formulating of the quality model designed explicitly for SCCs, with the following main objectives: to serve as a navigation guide to achieve managerial excellence; function as a benchmarking tool; and lastly, act as a reference for both internal and external communication. In addition, it serves as a mechanism to document data related to its performance, fostering a culture of continuous

improvement through specific actions. These data, in turn, can be used as critical inputs to shape present and future strategic trajectories.

This research lays the foundation for a clear and comprehensive framework, defining SCCs. This conceptualization provides a necessary foundation for future studies, allowing researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to accurately identify and categorize SCCs, filling an existing gap in the field. On the other hand, this SCC definition provides clarity, which contributes to a shared understanding among interested parties, helping better decision-making and strategic planning within the scope of SCCs, in addition to providing SCCs with a distinctive identity that differentiates them from other business models, which can help foster specialized support, development of specific regulation and a discourse adapted to the specific attributes of SCCs.

Since SCCs operate at the intersection of social and collaborative principles, the quality model provided bridges this gap by encompassing the various requirements and obstacles these companies face. This addresses a gap in current quality management frameworks, which may not fully align with the dual objectives inherent to SCCs. Furthermore, by placing significant emphasis on delivering products and services of adequate quality while preserving their social mission, this quality model provides SCCs with the necessary tools for sustainable expansion. This, in turn, contributes to the resilience and long-term viability of SCCs, allowing them to thrive over time.

Additionally, given the scarcity of research in this field, this Quality Model marks a direction to evaluate and improve the performance of the SCCs. This approach not only strengthens the competitive advantage of individual SCCs, but also promotes a broader understanding of how companies can successfully combine collaboration and social responsibility.

In summary, this research contributes to the landscape of SCCs by defining and clarifying their identity and operational framework, and proposing a customized quality model that aligns with their unique characteristics. These contributions mark a significant advance in an area that lacks extensive prior exploration and offer insights and tools that can guide the development and sustainability of SCCs.

### *5.2.2 Chapter 3 summary, conclusions, and main contributions*

Chapter 3 had the objective of validating the Quality Model adapted to the SCC, meeting the following milestones: identifying the central facets that the Quality Model encompasses, through the formulation of descriptive statements organized in a questionnaire intended to be applied by a group of experts, then examine the data collected from the questionnaire using a grounded theory approach using the Gioia methodology and finally assimilate the knowledge acquired during the validation process to make corrections or changes that contribute to the evolution and improvement of the same.

Derived from the data collected through the application of the questionnaire in the semi-structured interviews that involve a panel of experts, a series of conclusions emerge. These findings have been classified, on the one hand, in a data structure for each dimension of the model (management, operations and continuous improvement) following the Gioia methodology, and, on the other hand, in results derived from the evaluation of factors such as clarity, coherence and relevance. This evaluation has led to the identification of specific areas that need modification. Subsequently, a thorough review of the wording was carried out and necessary modifications were meticulously integrated into the Quality Model for SCCs based on these discerned adjustments.

The validation of the Quality Model for the SCC yields several contributions to advance in the understanding and application of the SCC. Firstly, the validation process provides empirical evidence of the effectiveness and relevance of the Quality Model in the context of SCCs, bridging the gap between theory and real-world implementation and offering stakeholders (professionals, researchers and others) a reliable framework to improve the operational excellence of SCCs.

On the other hand, by involving a group of experts in the validation process, the practical utility of the Quality Model is based. Expert insights and feedback contribute to refining the model, ensuring its alignment with SCC dynamics. Also, through the validation process, SCCs gain access to a proven framework that guides their pursuit of quality and sustainability. The validated model offers a roadmap for implementation, speeding up decision-making and action planning.

In summary, the validation of the Quality Model corroborates its practical feasibility, offers concrete guidance for the implementation of SCCs and enriches the broader understanding of quality management within the unique context of SCCs.

### *5.2.3 Chapter 4 summary, conclusions and main contributions*

The objectives of chapter 4 were: firstly, to establish the specific criteria to identify Collaborative Social Enterprises (SCC) based on the existing definition; second, to develop a methodology to effectively implement the quality model in SCCs, enabling them to fulfill their social mission while aligning with stakeholder expectations, integrating the quality model into operations, fostering continuous improvement, and providing a framework for quality monitoring and evaluation; and finally, to apply this validated Quality Model to Som Mobilitat, an electric car rental company in Barcelona, Spain, with the aim of evaluating the impact of the model on the company's performance and solidifying its practical importance.

Regarding the contributions of this part of the research, it can be started by indicating that the establishment of criteria to identify Social Collaborative Enterprises (SCC) fills a gap in the literature, and provides a systematic approach to recognize SCC in the midst of the diverse panorama of social and collaborative enterprises, this contributes to a better classification and understanding of these entities, improving the ability to distinguish SCCs from other business models.

On the other hand, the development of a methodology to implement the quality model for the SCC offers a practical and structured framework for organizations that aspire to align with the principles of the SCC. This methodology integrates the social mission of the SCCs with the expectations of the interest groups, facilitating the effective incorporation of the Quality Model in the operating strategies. The step-by-step guidance provided allows SCCs to be oriented to meet their social objectives and at the same time offer quality products and services, promoting sustainability and excellence.

Regarding the application of the Quality Model and the methodology specifically in Som Mobilitat, it helps to demonstrate the feasibility and effectiveness of the



proposed approach. Likewise, research provides tools and knowledge to make informed decisions. The identified gaps and proposed action plans offer a roadmap for SCCs to improve their operational efficiency, transparency, stakeholder engagement, and overall performance. SCCs are also encouraged to foster a culture of excellence and responsiveness to evolving challenges and opportunities.

Furthermore, as the concept of SCCs evolves and gains prominence, this research contributes significantly to the theoretical and practical understanding of these entities and can enrich discussions about SCCs and their potential to drive positive social impact while operational excellence is guaranteed.

In summary, the contributions of this research segment lie in providing clear criteria for SCC identification, a structured methodology to implement the Quality Model, and its application and validation within a real-world SCC scenario. These contributions collectively advance the understanding, practical implementation, and potential transformative impact of SCCs on the social and collaborative economy landscape.

### **5.3. Limitations and avenues for future research**

Although this research has endeavored to contribute to the understanding of Collaborative Social Enterprises (SCCs) and their quality management, it is essential to recognize certain limitations that deserve consideration. First, the proposed quality model, while comprehensive and based on extensive research, relied on a small sample of experts for the validation process, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. The limitation of a small sample size in this study is addressed by the deliberate choice of the Gioia Methodology, which adds value in such circumstances. The Gioia Methodology is recognized for its qualitative rigor and its ability to uncover rich contextual knowledge based on conversations or interviews conducted with interviewees by employing systematic data collection and rigorous analysis techniques. It excels at capturing nuances, patterns and complexities that may be overlooked in larger, quantitative studies and reveals deep qualitative insights, making it a suitable and valuable choice for this research.

One avenue for future research lies in the extension and refinement of the SCC concept. Extending the analysis to a broader group of experts and using quantitative methods for statistical validation could improve the reliability and applicability of the quality model. Such an approach would involve not only examining its effectiveness but also establishing objective compliance criteria and evaluating the suitability of the defined features of SCC in real-world businesses. Additionally, exploring the application of this quality model to other types of social enterprises, such as certified B Corps, could reveal both shared attributes and distinctive characteristics, leading to more nuanced measures of their social impact.

In addition, it is worth considering the implementation and long-term follow-up of the proposed actions and methodology. Ongoing follow-ups, carried out in the short, medium and long term, can provide valuable information on the feasibility and sustainability of these approaches. By studying the applicability of the model across various SCCs in specific sectors, such as car sharing or cooperatives, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of sector-specific behaviors and best practices. These cross-sector comparisons can uncover vital lessons that can be shared with similar organizations to improve performance, strengthen the quality of products and services, and maintain their commitment to social and democratic values.

Ultimately, this research presents an opportunity for scholars to delve into the broader landscape of social and sharing economies. As shared mobility gains prominence in the sharing economy and experiences substantial growth, deeper examinations of platform cooperatives within this sector could provide insight into their dynamics, challenges, and potential for sustainable development (Hu & Creutzig, 2022). Continued research efforts in this area have the potential to contribute not only to refining the SCC concept but also to advance innovative strategies to foster social well-being while ensuring economic viability.

## 6. References

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## 7. Appendix

### **Appendix I. Questionnaire from empirical validation of this article: On the convergence of Collaborative and Social Economy: A Quality Model for the combined effects**

1. Would you add one or more dimensions in the model showed in Figure 1? Which?
2. Would you drop a dimension in the model showed in Figure 1? Which?
3. Is there any key point missing in the "management" dimension in Figure 2? Which?
4. Is there any key point missing in the "operations" dimension in Figure 3? Which?
5. Is there any key point missing in the "continuous improving" dimension in Figure 4? Which?
6. Is Figure 5 clear enough to provide an idea of how the model works? Say between 1 (not at all) and 5 (absolutely).

Distribute 10 points among the three dimensions of the model, according to the importance of each one (management, operations, and continuous improvement).

## Appendix II. Decision letter Study 2

24/9/23, 8:00

Correo de Universitat Internacional de Catalunya - Decision letter: [IJQR Submission system] Submission ID 13418



JENNY PIERINA Moreno Chacón <pierina.moreno@uic.es>

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### Decision letter: [IJQR Submission system] Submission ID 13418

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ijqr <ijqr@kg.ac.rs>

1 de julio de 2023, 16:13

Para: JENNY PIERINA Moreno Chacón <pierina.moreno@uic.es>

#### Decision Letter (IJQR –13418)

**X Paper acceptable for publication in its present form,**

Conditional acceptance with minor revision,

Major revision required,

Unacceptable.

Dear authors,

**It is a pleasure to accept your manuscript IJQR –13418 entitled "A Quality Model for Social Collaborative Companies with a validation based on Gioia methodology " in its current form for publication in International Journal for Quality Research.**

To assure the integrity, dissemination, and protection against copyright infringement of published articles, you need to assign us, via an Author Agreement, the copyright in your article titled "Service Quality Management in Term of IHRM Concept and the Employee Internationalization".

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For papers where there is more than one author, each author should complete his/her own Author Agreement and send it to us.

Thank you for your contribution.

Sincerely,

In Kragujevac, Serbia

PhD MiladinStefanovic

**International Journal for Quality Research**

Executive Editor

24/9/23, 8:01

Correo de Universitat Internacional de Catalunya - Decision letter: [IJQR Submission system] Submission ID 13418



JENNY PIERINA Moreno Chacón <pierina.moreno@uic.es>

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**Decision letter: [IJQR Submission system] Submission ID 13418**

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ijqr <ijqr@kg.ac.rs>

21 de agosto de 2023, 13:09

Para: JENNY PIERINA Moreno Chacón <pierina.moreno@uic.es>

Dear JENNY PIERINA Moreno Chacón ,

I believe that you received the certificate. Doi number of your manuscript is 10.24874/IJQR18.02-01

The manuscript will be on-line in the forthcoming section in a few days (we were on summer break).

The manuscript will be printed in v18 n2.

If you have any other questions do not hesitate to ask.

Best reagrds,

Miladin Stefanovic



### Appendix III. Questionnaire for the semi-structured interviews

Quality Model Dimension	Subcategory	Statement	
Management	Strategy	1	The company has a vision and mission statement with a clear social purpose. These statements are public and known to all stakeholders (Mas-Machuca et al., 2017 ; Pearce & David, 2015).
		2	The company has identified all stakeholders and their needs. This reflexion is made by top management and reviewed at least once a year (EFQM, 2019; Escrig-Tena et al., 2019).
		3	The company has a concrete strategic plan which explains how the mission and vision will be achieved. This Strategic Plan is reviewed at least once a year (Escrig-Tena et al., 2019).
	Leadership	4	Top management has defined the values, including the social mission within the collaboration and participation environment (Mas-Machuca et al., 2017).
		5	The leadership performance is evaluated at least once a year (based on the observable behaviours) (N. Melão et al., 2019).
		6	Leadership role model is considered in the job definitions and in the hiring process for all job positions (N. Melão et al., 2019).
	Social management	7	The company activity can be considered to have a positive impact in society (Falcón-Pérez & Fuentes-Perdomo, 2019).
		8	The company perform a Context Analysis considering the critical topics that can influence in the main activities, such as: environment, compliance, public administration, stakeholders, leadership, communications, brand, etc. (Escrig-Tena et al., 2019; Fonseca, 2022b)
		9	Context Analysis is an input for the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan is reviewed and updated at least once a year (Escrig-Tena et al., 2019; Fonseca, 2022b).
	Governance	10	The company has a democratic style of governance, where one person equals to one vote (Bauwens, 2014; Scholz, 2019).
		11	The company has defined a concrete strategy to assure efficient decision-making process (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018).
		12	The company has rules and procedures to guarantee the transparency about the information related to decision-making (Falcón-Pérez & Fuentes-Perdomo, 2019).

Quality Model Dimension	Subcategory	Statement	
Operations	Provider of products and / or services	13	The company has a process map that includes the customer, providers and platform activities and processes and the interaction between them (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018; McIntyre et al., 2020).
		14	There is a quality control established in each point of change of responsibility (i.e., provider to customer, customer to other customer, etc.) according to the defined processes (Wen & Siqin, 2020).
		15	The company has clear aspects such as operational capacity, cost structure, customer requirements, KPI's, platform operation, on time delivery, ethical code, etc. (Hong et al., 2019).
	Platform	16	The company ensures that it knows the requirements of customers regarding the platform (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018; Hong et al., 2019).
		17	The company has a system to evaluate the platform performance. This system is periodic and objective, and all these results are discussed on a strategic level (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018)
		18	If the company has an external platform provider, the company ensures that they have an adequate control over this, that includes a legal agreement about key points (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018)
		19	The company ensures that it adequately communicates the client's requirements regarding the platform, and that the platform is really in charge of facilitating contact between supplier and client (Akhmedova et al., 2020)
	Customers	20	The company is responsible for the definition and communication of the client's requirements regarding the product /service and the platform that acts as an intermediary (Amat-Lefort et al., 2020)
		21	The company has a system to evaluate the customer satisfaction and to record relevant information. The results are discussed in a strategic level (Amat-Lefort et al., 2020; Seth et al., 2005; Akhmedova et al., 2020)
		22	The company encourages consumers to report on conditions of the shared products after completion of the usage (Ex: with monetary rewards, discounts, points, etc.) (Priporas et al., 2017)
		23	The company identifies good practices in a periodical way and manages this information on a strategic level (Lasrado & Nyadzayo, 2019)

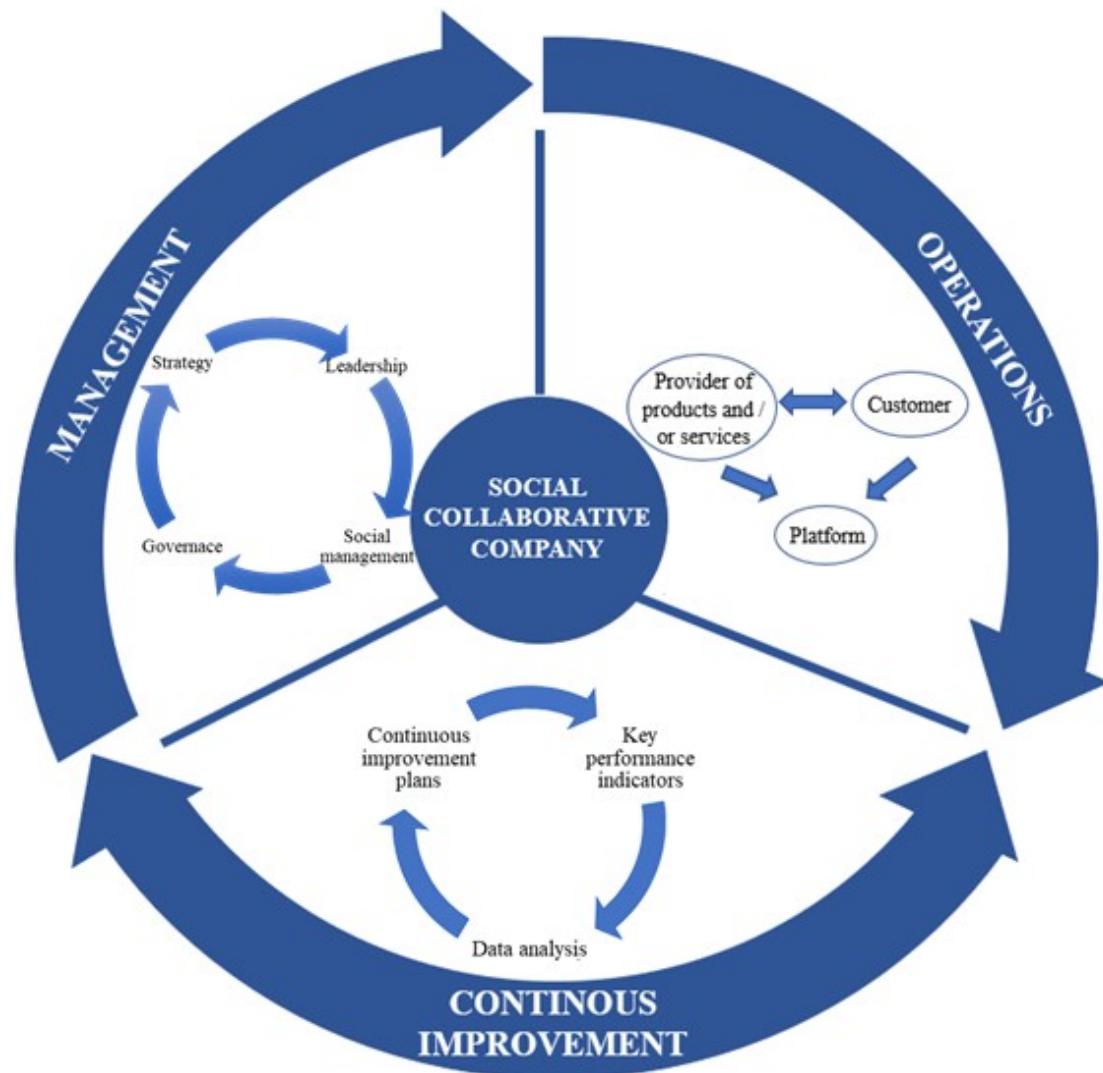
Quality Model Dimension	Subcategory	Statement	
Continuous improvement	Key performance indicators	24	The company ensures its abilities to establish key indicators to analyse operational results, financial results, customer satisfaction results, and social results and can have an adequate and efficient management vision and control (Zale, 2016 & Melão et al., 2018a)
		25	The company establishes robust data capturing systems and defining key indicators properly (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018)
	Data Analysis	26	The company analyses the data with proper tools for needs. This data analysis allows models and predictions to be made that allow for more information about the future. (Markides & Sosa, 2013; Muñoz & Cohen, 2018)
	Actions plans	27	The analysis of non-financial indicators is also considered; that is, the organization carries out an analysis, allowing the needs of stakeholders to be continually reviewed, changes in market players to be possibly made, and for technological innovations and other changes in the environment that may affect it. (Fuster Morell, 2011; Zhang et al., 2019)
		28	The company establishes sufficient resources to develop the continuous improvement actions (Markides & Sosa, 2013; & Melão et al., 2018b)

## Appendix IV. Questionnaire results

Dimension	Sub-category	Indicators	AVERAGE		
			Clarity	Coherence	Relevance
Management	Strategy	1 The company has a vision and mission statement with a clear social propose. These statements are public and known to all stakeholders	3,75	4,00	4,00
		2 The company has identified all stakeholders and their needs. This reflexion is made by top management and reviewed at least once a year	3,88	3,75	3,63
		3 The company has a concrete strategic plan which explains how the mission and vision will be achieved. This Strategic Plan is reviewed at least once a year	4,00	4,00	4,00
	Leadership	4 Top management has defined the values, including the social mission within the collaboration and participation environment	3,75	3,88	4,00
		5 The leadership performance is evaluated at least once a year (based on the observable behaviours)	3,00	2,88	3,75
		6 Leadership role model is considered in the job definitions and in the hiring process for all job positions	3,50	3,88	3,88
	Social management	7 The company activity can be considered to have a positive impact in society	3,25	3,50	4,00
		8 The company perform a Context Analysis considering the critical topics that can influence in the main activities, such as: environment, compliance, public administration, stakeholders, leadership, communications, brand, etc.	3,75	3,88	4,00
		9 Context Analysis is an input for the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan is reviewed and updated at least once a year	3,75	4,00	4,00
	Governance	10 The company has a democratic style of governance, where one person equals to one vote	3,25	3,38	3,75
		11 The company has defined a concrete strategy to assure efficient decision-making process	3,50	3,63	3,88
		12 The company has rules and procedures to guarantee the transparency about the information related to decision-making	4,00	4,00	4,00
Operations	Provider of products and / or services	13 The company has a process map that includes the customer, providers and platform activities and processes and the interaction between them	3,75	3,75	4,00
		14 There is a quality control established in each point of change of responsibility (i.e., provider to customer, customer to other customer, etc.) according to the defined processes	3,63	3,88	4,00
		15 The company has clear aspects such as operational capacity, cost structure, customer requirements, KPI's, platform operation, on time delivery, ethical code, etc.	3,63	3,75	4,00
	Platform	16 The company ensures that it knows the requirements of customers regarding the platform	4,00	4,00	4,00
		17 The company has a system to evaluate the platform performance. This system is periodic and objective, and all these results are discussed on a strategic level	3,88	4,00	4,00
		18 If the company has an external platform provider, the company ensures that they have an adequate control over this, that includes a legal agreement about key points	3,88	4,00	4,00
		19 The company ensures that it adequately communicates the client's requirements regarding the platform, and that the platform is really in charge of facilitating contact between supplier and client	3,38	4,00	4,00
	Customers	20 The company is responsible for the definition and communication of the client's requirements regarding the product /service and the platform that acts as an intermediary	3,88	3,88	4,00
		21 The company has a system to evaluate the customer satisfaction and to record relevant information. The results are discussed in a strategic level	4,00	4,00	4,00
		22 The company encourages consumers to report on conditions of the shared products after completion of the usage (Ex: with monetary rewards, discounts, points, etc.)	3,88	4,00	4,00
		23 The company identifies good practices in a periodical way and manages this information on a strategic level	3,50	3,63	3,75
Continuous improvement	Key performance indicators	24 The company ensures its abilities to establish key indicators to analyse operational results, financial results, customer satisfaction results, and social results and can have an adequate and efficient management vision and control	3,38	3,25	3,75
		25 The company establishes robust data capturing systems and defining key indicators properly	3,63	3,63	3,75
	Data Analysis	26 The company analyses the data with proper tools for needs. This data analysis allows models and predictions to be made that allow for more information about the future	3,63	3,63	3,88
	Actions plans	27 The analysis of non-financial indicators is also considered; that is, the organization carries out an analysis, allowing the needs of stakeholders to be continually reviewed, changes in market players to be possibly made, and for technological innovations and other changes in the environment that may affect it	3,63	3,75	3,88
		28 The company establishes sufficient resources to develop the continuous improvement actions	3,25	3,38	3,88
Average			3,65	3,76	3,92
Minimum			3,00	2,88	3,63
Maximum			4,00	4,00	4,00

## Appendix V. Quality Model for Social Collaborative Companies (SCC) after validation

Regarding the layout and general definition of the Quality Model for SCC, the three dimensions (Management, Operations and Continuous Improvement) remains the same in an uninterrupted cyclical relationship arises among them, in which each dimension mutually influence each other.



### I. Management

Management is where it all begins; it is the world of ideas, where the directors think about what they want to do, why this value offer is socially collaborative, what makes sense for this SCC; in short, what needs to be done to deliver a sustainable value

proposal for the stakeholders inside the collaborative economy environment. The management dimension is composed of four subcategories: social management, strategy, leadership and governance.

These subcategories work together and influence each other. This can be represented in a circle such as:

- a. **Social management:** For this quality model, the purpose of the definition is to answer the following questions: why is it important to work on this? How does it intend to fulfil it? And how can this purpose be kept over time? The company must have a social mission with a social purpose clearly defined (Mas-Machuca et al., 2017) (Muñoz & Kimmitt, 2019) and aimed at solving a social need being a positive influence in society, its activities must have a positive impact in the well-being of the people related. Furthermore, it also needs to have a future vision and be very clear about what it wants to achieve in the short and long term. This includes the economic sustainability that guarantees the survival of the business and all the parties involved, even if the company is a non-profit business (Bunders, 2022). This social mission and vision should support the strategy.
  
- b. **Leadership:** In an SCC, leadership takes on a sensitive nature; its social mission must be accompanied by behaviors that are aligned with it at all levels of the organization. In leadership it is important to highlight the need to develop a culture based on co-creation where a win-win paradigm is part of it. The main objective of the leadership role is to inspire appropriate behaviors, redirect deviations and give credibility to stakeholders on the alignment of the organizational culture with the company's social mission. This is to ensure that there are no inconsistencies but promotes the sense of belonging of the people who are part of the company, encourages collaborative and participative environment, creates the conditions for realizing its activities according to the values such as: creativity, innovation, diversity, solidarity, etc. and finally promotes engagement to fulfil the mission, vision and strategy. Due to its importance, the leadership role model must be clearly defined in job descriptions and considered in the hiring process, and the performance must

be evaluated periodically with specific and objectives tools considering that the purpose to this is to reinforce their capacities.

- c. **Strategy:** On the strategic level, the SCC must have a complete understanding about who are its stakeholders and their needs in terms of: leadership, social management, governance, etc. Finally, the strategy must have a concrete implementation plan, which explains how the mission and vision will be achieved. Also, strategy must include a deep analysis of the context, considering everything that happens around it, such as the environment, the relationship with the public administration, knowing who the stakeholders are, the needs and expectations of its customers, leadership, relationship with its suppliers, communications, perception of the values of their brand, etc. When the context is clear, it can build a strong relationship with them and give support to the strategy. Both, strategic plans, and context analysis must be evaluated, reviewed, updated, and communicated (if is the case) with a frequency that adjusts to changes in the business environment in which the company is.
- d. **Governance:** The most critical voices of the collaborative economy point out that, part of the problem is, power and wealth are concentrated in the hands of few people, so the benefits of scalability offered by platforms are overshadowed by something that resembles aggressive capitalist practices. One answer to this is found in platform cooperativism, or more broadly in SCCs as defined in this paper. These companies have a democratic style of government, where one person equals one vote being clearly defined with other modalities if a democratic decision-making process is ensured. However, it is essential that companies know how to handle the complexity involved in this form of decision-making, with its advantages and disadvantages. The main advantages are that greater involvement of workers is achieved, that their decisions matter, and they learn from general aspects of the business; in short, what "happens" in the company depends on them, and they are not passive bystanders. However, this governance model faces difficulties such as needing to spend more time and effort in the search for consensus and the

apparent contradiction that the worker acts as "boss" at the same time. To do this, it is necessary that all aspects related to the decision-making process have set of defined rules written which are known by all those involved, to avoid lack of definition and arbitrariness. This definition process must be oriented to guarantee not only the democracy but also decentralized decision-making in most cases, whenever possible. In addition, the SCC must guarantee transparency in the information for decision-making; it must have all the concrete mechanisms necessary to obtain consensus, along with appropriate leadership that fosters participation and collaboration framed in solid values and the adequate integration of the mission and vision in each of the decisions that are made.

## II. Operations

This dimension refers to all the processes that are necessary for a person to enjoy the products or services offered by the platform with an adequate quality (Hsieh & Hiang, 2004), necessary for current and future success. For the operations, the quality model considers the importance of all the actors (provider, customer and platform) in the quality perceived by the client (Akhmedova, Marimon, et al., 2020). An SCC may have the best product or service, but if it does not have good quality on its platform, the "total" quality perceived by the client will not be satisfactory. The same is true the other way around; a company can have the best platform, but if the product or service does not have the required quality, it will not leave the customer satisfied either. For this reason, all these actors must work towards operative excellence.

- a. **Provider of products and/or service:** In collaborative business models, anyone can be a provider of a certain product and service. Now, considering that the quality perceived by the client is higher when their expectations and their perception of the product or service received are aligned, it is important that the SCC applies professional tools for development, evaluation and measurement of its performance, among these a complete process map that include all the processes and its interactions must be develop including the definition about how to assurance the quality in each activities even more when the responsibility change, for example when a manufacturer of products



deliver them to a carrier. Another very important aspect about providers is that the company must assume the responsibility of defining in detail and efficiently communicating the needs and expectations of the client regarding the product and service and the platform that acts as an intermediary.

The company must develop requirements for choosing providers and carry out an evaluation to determine their "suitability" giving preference to suppliers with the same characteristics of social purpose, with the purpose of promoting them and expanding their network of action considering the common good. It must also develop actions to advance suitability that do not meet the requirements and complement them to develop and improve their performance. A provider must have clear aspects such as operational capacity, cost structure, customer requirements, process indicators, platform operation, on time delivery, ethical code, etc.

On the other hand, it is necessary to evaluate the performance of providers, considering the comments and to go beyond the observation of customer comments on platforms. There may be dissatisfied customers who does not write a review. Also, when a customer writes a negative comment, negative perception of the quality of the product or service delivered is already in an individual's mind; therefore, it is not possible to carry out preventive actions.

- b. **Platform:** In this quality model, the platform is considered as part of the operational management. It is a facilitator of the delivery of products or services that correspond to the company's value proposition. As in the case of the supplier, the SCC must invest part of its efforts in knowing the expectations and needs of the client regarding the operation of the platform so that its operations are adequate and do not interfere with the perception of the quality of the products or services delivered.

In the case in which the company has an external platform provider, the company must define in a proper detailed level all the requirement about the platform and have a very close relationship with it. This includes adequate control over the subcontracted process that can be a legal agreement about

the ability to make changes, data processing, ethics in data management to guarantee the privacy of the customer personal data, the adequate availability of data for handling customers claims and potential legal claims, and also other commitments about the ability to respond to changes in the organization to adapt to the products or services provided. If the platform is developed and managed internally, the organization must be able to control that the platform has adequate capacity and efficient operations.

In any case, the company must ensure that it adequately communicates the client's requirements regarding the platform and that the platform is really in charge of facilitating contact between supplier and client and facilitating the delivery of products and services in accordance with what is established. On the other hand, it is necessary for the company to have an adequate evaluation system on the performance of the platform, which provides objective information on a regular basis and that this information is an input for the construction of key indicators in decision making. The platform is considered as an added service to the product or service, but in addition to this, it is a great provider of data that must be analyzed for continuous improvement.

Finally, one cannot lose sight of the fact that any change in the provider's or platform's operations may affect the quality of the products or services; therefore, the organization must constantly analyze these changes and ensure that actions are taken so that the perception of customer quality is not negatively affected.

- c. **Customers:** Even before defining the strategic aspects (value proposition, purpose, vision etc.), the SCC must know what its client wants, what it does not like, what it likes, etc. Knowing customer expectations is a key factor for sustainability and for designing operational processes capable of giving responses to customers. It should be borne in mind that the consumer is very informed and has great power; at the click of a button, a consumer can go to another platform and leave a very bad recommendation on the platform.

Furthermore, do clients know what they can expect regarding quality of the products or services they obtain through an SCC? For the answer to always be affirmative, the SCC must ensure that the customer knows that they can expect the product and/or service that they have purchased, to have an in-person experience and to know what to expect from the suppliers and the platform separately. This is important for the customer to have expectations that are in line with reality and for the SCC to assess its ability to meet them.

The SCC must have a system to evaluate the customer satisfaction and to record relevant information when they are part of the operations, encouraging the customer to evaluate the product and/or service and to share their experience (Ex: monetary rewards, discounts, etc.). In addition, it is necessary to identify good practices that will generate an approach to customers, for example: communication strategy, brand image, the media where messages are transmitted, the availability and transparency in the handling of data, etc. The result of this evaluation must be translated in relevant information to be discussed in a strategic level.

### **III. Continuous improvement**

Continuous improvement must be the consequence of data analysis or technological innovation. Data has great value; the digital environment allows us to record every action automatically and permanently, and consequently enormous amounts of information are generated. In this context, the SCC must ensure the reliability of the information it handles. On the other hand, the organization must ensure its ability to establish key indicators to analyze operational results, financial results, customer satisfaction results and social results. It must also ensure that robust data capturing systems are established in addition to suitable defining key indicators.

For data analysis the SCC must ensure that it has the appropriate tools according to their size and needs. It must analyze the data and assess whether the results are aligned with the social mission and with the defined strategy. Furthermore, data analysis should also allow models and predictions to be made that allow for more information about the future to be had, and from there, establish appropriate action plans.

The data analysis must include an analysis of the environment with a frequency appropriate to its size and activity, allowing for the needs of stakeholders to be continually reviewed, changes in market players to be possibly made and for technological innovations and other changes in the environment that may affect an organization. Also, must include the analysis of non-financial metrics even if they encounter the challenge that there is no consensus on how to measure the social impact or social added value produced (Bassi & Vincenti, 2015). Also, the SCC must define a set of indicators that should be at the same level of the rest of key metrics. To do this, it can take into consideration some standard methodologies such as: Social Balance Sheet (Valmayor et al., 2021; Varzazu & Varzazu, 2014), among others.

After analyzing the data for the decision-making daily basis and for the action plan definition with concrete resources for it in accordance to the strategic guidelines, the organization must encourage continuous improvement from within, creating a mindset for creativity and innovation, including disruptive thinking as an essential ingredient in helping the organization to generate increased value and an improved level of performance.

## Appendix VI. Confirming submission. Study 3

16/10/23, 10:55

Correo de Universitat Internacional de Catalunya - Confirming submission to Long Range Planning



JENNY PIERINA Moreno Chacón <pierina.moreno@uic.es>

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### Confirming submission to Long Range Planning

2 mensajes

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**Long Range Planning** <em@editorialmanager.com>  
Responder a: Long Range Planning <support@elsevier.com>  
Para: Pierina Moreno Chacon <pierina.moreno@uic.es>

16 de octubre de 2023, 10:53

\*This is an automated message.\*

Quality Model for Social Collaborative Companies: Implementation Methodology Using the Case of a Car-Sharing Company

Dear Mrs Moreno Chacon,

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