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A QUALITY MODEL FOR SOCIAL COLLABORATIVE COMPANIES WITH A VALIDATION BASED ON GIOIA METHODOLOGY

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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.*

1. Introduction

The collaborative economy is fueling interest in the academic field (Gutiérrez 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, 2016). 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 words (Olsi, 2013), and to adopt a collaborative-social perspective offers quality products and services, which in turn allows for sustainable development over time.

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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 & Mattsson, 2016; Benoit et al., 2017).

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

- i. 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.
- ii. To analyse the information collected through a questionnaire by using a grounded theory approach through Gioia methodology.
- iii. 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.

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, 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) (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. Methodology

To validate the Quality Model for SCC proposed in the article ‘On the convergence of collaborative and social economy: A quality model for the combined effect’ (2021), 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, (2006); Gioia et al., (2013) and Charmaz & Thornberg, (2021).

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.

3.1. 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, 2019).

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., 2014).

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, most of which have already been developed in the article previously

mentioned: 'On the convergence of collaborative and social economy: A quality model for the combined effects'. 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 Annex A.

Finally, we sent the questionnaire (Annex A) 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, 2007).

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

Table 1. 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. 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 1, 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.

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).

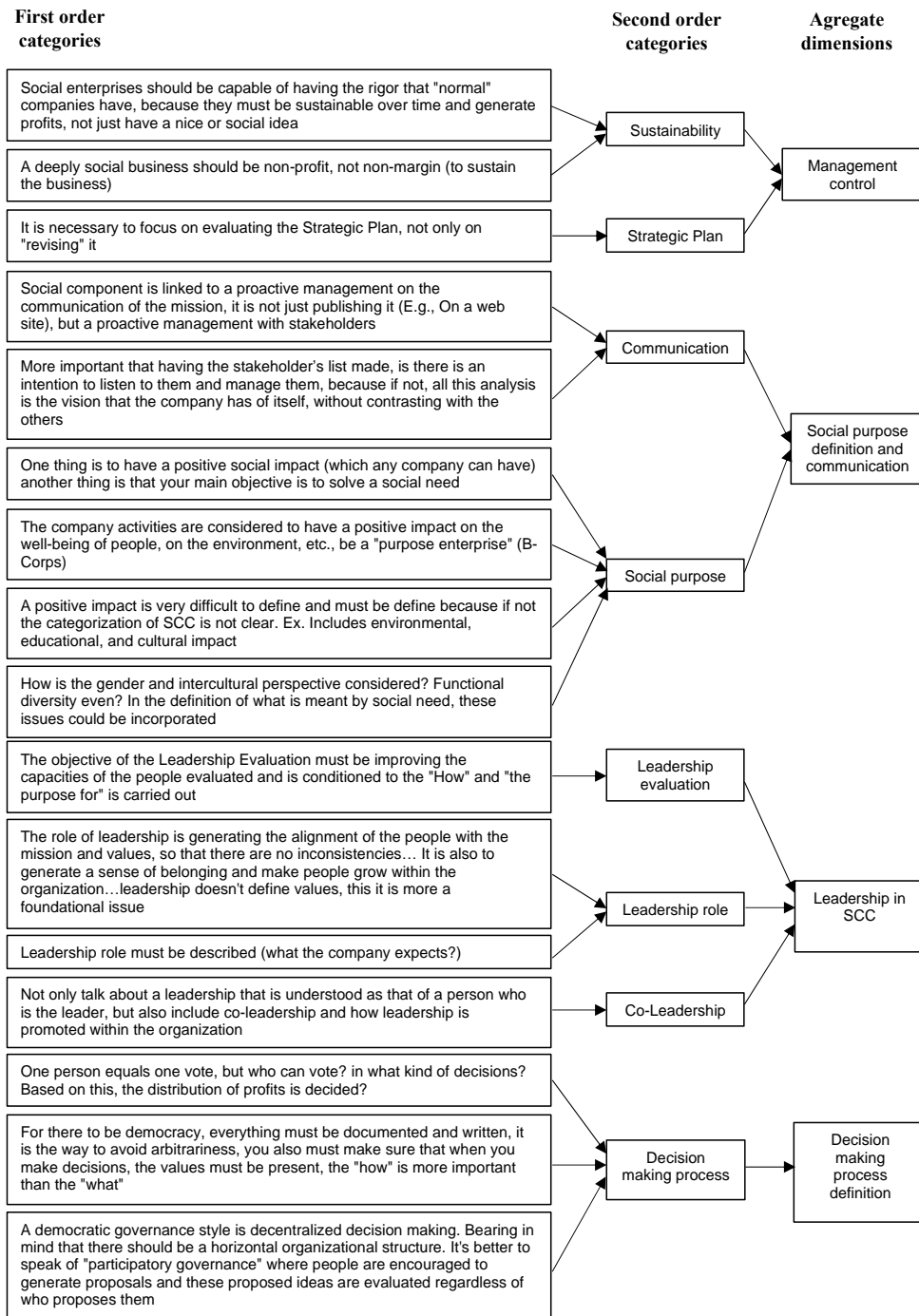


Figure 1. Data Structure (Gioia Methodology) of the Quality Model for SCC Management Dimension

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).

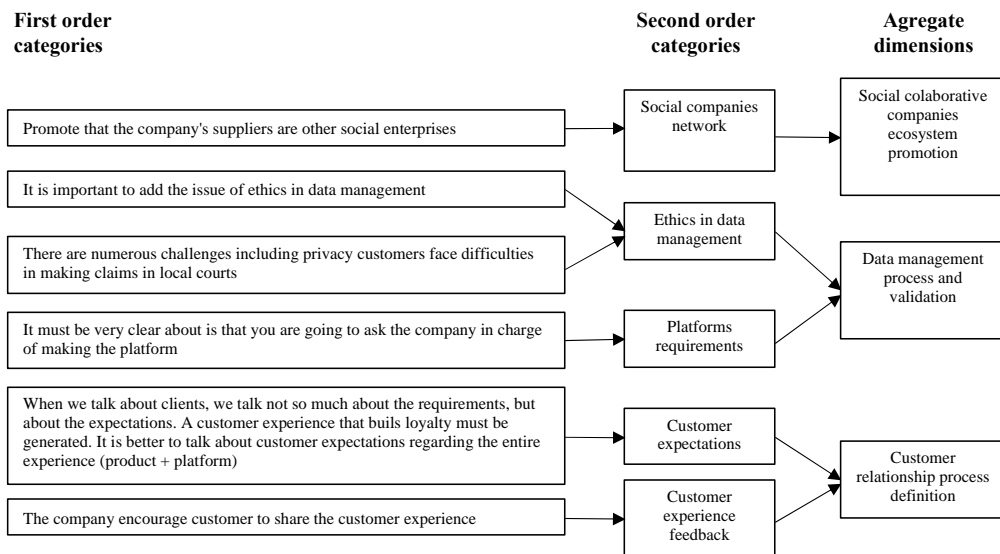


Figure 2. Data structure (Gioia Methodology) of the Quality Model for SCC, Operations Dimension

Regarding Operations dimension of the Quality Model for SCC, Figure 2 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.

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 Definition Process, 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 3 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).

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.

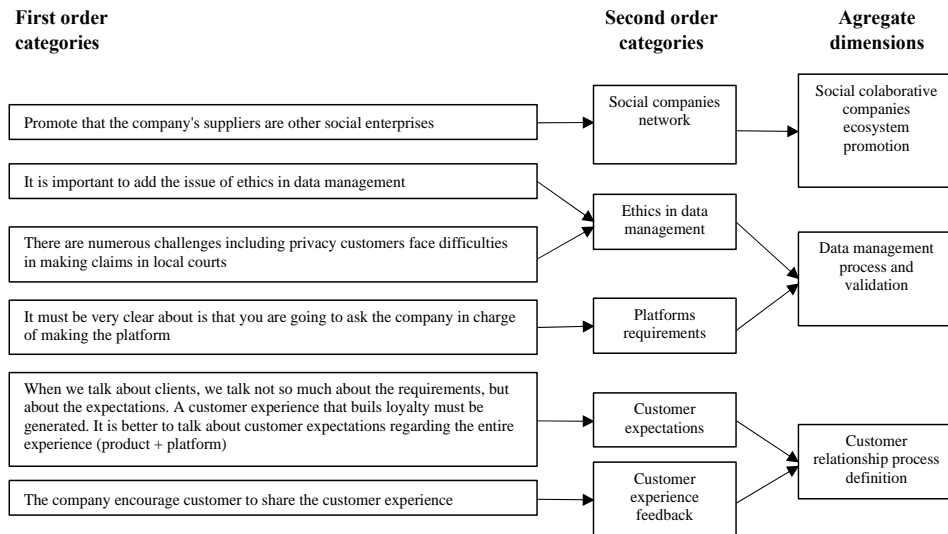


Figure 3. Data structure (Gioia Methodology) of the Quality Model for SCC, Continuous Improvement Dimension

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 Annex B.

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 2).

Table 2. Findings for the Quality 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"> • 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. • 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.
	Social Management	Social purpose definition and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace mission with social mission, and social purpose must be clearly defined. • 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.
	Leadership	Leadership in SCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
	Governance	Decision Making process decentralization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 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.
Operations	Provider of products and/or services	Social collaborative companies' ecosystem promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
	Platform	Data Management process and validation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include the point that the company must define in proper detail all the requirements about the platform. • 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. • 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
	Customers	Customer relationship definition process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change customer requirements for customer expectations. • 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. • Include that the result of this evaluation must be translated to relevant information to be discussed at a strategic level.
Continuous improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key performance indicators • Data Analysis • Actions Plan 	Key performance indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include that the SCC needs to make sure they possess suitable tools that match their size and requirements • 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. • Includes that the action plan must have concrete resources

5. Discussion and concluding remarks

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.

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 future 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 the 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 require 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.

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Annex A. 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 (Bruder, 2021; 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).
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).

Quality Model Dimension	Subcategory	Statement	Quality Model Dimension
Operations	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)
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)

Annex B. Total average evaluation results in term of Clarity, Coherence and Relevance

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
Operations	Provider of products and / or services	12 The company has rules and procedures to guarantee the transparency about the information related to decision-making	4,00	4,00	4,00
		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
	Platform	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
		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
	Customers	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
		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

