Collaborative Networking of Researchers in Quality:

A Portuguese Case

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – Experience of a Portuguese network of researchers in quality is presented, and future development is discussed based on literature related to business collaborative network.

Design/methodology/approach – Literature review based on company's networks was used whenever applicable, and it was adapted to individual networks. A critical analysis of the network is carried out, bearing in mind development along its functioning for 9 years.

Findings – The experience shows some positive achievements (ex. a scientific journal), and some difficulties (ex: common projects). However, the most important issues for future sustainability are related to management dimensions like structure, strategy, earnings, relationships and performance.

Research limitations/implications – Higher Education Institutions are increasingly competing for resources and students. Small Research and Development (R&D) teams, such as quality, face relatively more difficulties than large ones. Collaborative networking can be a good solution.

Practical implications – Conclusions and reflection may interest other countries and regions.

Social implications – The weak mutual knowledge among quality researchers, as well as the lack of synergies between groups and individuals, can be a seriously weak point for development and scientific production. Coopetition can be possible and advantageous.

Originality/value – Research on quality issues is often carried out in small R&D teams. Collaborative networking can improve both theoretical and practical development.

Paper type: Conceptual

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