Contents

Declaration of Authorship **iii**

Abstract **ix**

Resum **ix**

Resumen **xi**

Acknowledgements **xv**

1 The research context **1**
1.1 Problem statement 1
1.2 Overview of the solution 3
1.3 Research methodology 3
1.3.1 Research questions 4
1.3.2 The research roadmap 4

2 Literature review about quality in MDE **7**
2.1 Introduction 8
2.2 Quality issues in MDE 10
2.2.1 Evolution and limitations of the MDA standard 10
2.2.2 A literature review about models and modelling language quality trends 13
2.2.3 Results 16
2.2.4 Identified categories of the definition of *quality* in MDE . 19
2.2.5 Adaptive sampling 24
2.2.6 Other findings 28
2.2.7 Discussion 31
2.2.8 The relationship between quality in MDE and V&V . . . 32
2.3 A mismatch analysis between industry and academy field on MDE quality evaluation 32
2.3.1 Literature review process design 33
2.3.2 Detected categories for industrial quality issues 36
MDA is not enough 37
Implicit questions derived from the MDE adoption itself . 37
Tools as a way to increase complexity 37
Organizational support for the adoption of MDE 38
2.3.3 Detected categories for academic/research quality issues . 38
Hard operationalization of model-quality frameworks . . . 38
Defects and metrics mainly in UML 38
Specificity in the scenarios for quality in models 39

Software quality principles extrapolated at modelling levels 39
2.3.4 Findings in the literature review of mismatch 40
2.4 The sufficiency of current quality evaluation proposals 45
2.5 Open challenges in the evaluation of the quality of modelling languages in MDE contexts 47
2.5.1 Using multiple modelling languages in combination 49
2.5.2 Assessing the compliance of modelling languages with MDE principles 50
2.5.3 Explicitly using abstraction levels as quality filters of modelling languages 51
2.5.4 Agreeing on a set of generic quality metrics for modelling languages 51
2.5.5 Including model transformations in the modelling language quality equation 52
2.5.6 Acknowledging the increasing dynamics of models 54
2.5.7 Streamlining ontological analyses of modelling languages . 55
2.5.8 Incorporating modelling language quality as a source of technical debt in MDE 56
2.6 Conclusions 57

3 MMQEF: the conceptual and methodological framework 61
3.1 Introduction 61
3.2 The research problem 62
3.2.1 Conceptual approaches for addressing quality issues in MDE 63
3.2.2 The reference taxonomy 64
3.2.3 The support of the taxonomy for MDE quality issues . . 66
3.3 The MMQEF method 67
3.3.1 Purposes and preconditions 67
3.3.2 Method components 68
3.3.3 Cooperation principles 69
Structure 69
Roles 69
3.3.4 The main quality evaluation method components 69
3.3.5 MDE quality analytics derived 71
Inference analysis derived from the Zachman taxonomy . 72
Derived supports for MDE quality evaluation 73
3.3.6 Tool support 76
3.3.7 An example application of the MMQEF method 76
3.4 Preliminary trade-off analysis of the MMQEF method 83
3.4.1 Main implications of the MMQEF method 83
Why taxonomy analysis? 83
Why this taxonomy? 84
Is it the only taxonomy? Why not a quality ontology instead? 84
3.4.2 Feasibility of the classification procedure for quality purposes 85
3.4.3 The use of the taxonomic structure itself 85
3.4.4 MMQFE and other quality frameworks for MDE 88

3.5 Conclusions . . . 89

4 The formal and technological support of the MMQEF method 91
4.1 Introduction . . . 91
4.2 The taxonomic analysis and the MMQEF method . . . 93
4.2.1 The formal support of the taxonomy for the quality evaluation analysis of modelling artifacts . . . 96
4.2.2 The Zachman framework as a taxonomic theory . . . 98
4.2.3 Related works . . . 99
4.3 The FCA method . . . 100
4.3.1 The FCA support for the taxonomic analysis . . . 101
4.4 The EMAT Tool . . . 103
4.4.1 Why is another FCA tool needed? Is EMAT another FCA tool? . . . 103
4.4.2 The taxonomic evaluation procedure using EMAT . . . 103
4.4.3 How should a resulting lattice be interpreted ? . . . 105
4.4.4 Other complementary functions . . . 106
4.4.5 EMAT architecture and future vision . . . 107
4.4.6 A trade-off analysis of the EMAT tool . . . 109
4.5 MMQEF and EMAT in practice . . . 110
4.5.1 Quality analysis of the UML and BPMN modelling languages 110
4.5.2 Quality analysis of the OO-Method and CA integration . 114
4.6 Discussion . . . 117
4.6.1 Why another quality framework for MDE? . . . 119
4.7 Conclusions . . . 124

5 Theoretical validation of the taxonomy used by MMQEF 125
5.1 Taxonomies and Information Systems . . . 126
5.2 Is the Zachman taxonomy the only one that cla-ssifies modelling languages? . . . 128
5.2.1 Results . . . 129
5.3 The previous use of the taxonomy to classify modelling languages 133
5.4 Conclusions . . . 135

6 Empirical Evaluation of MMQEF 137
6.1 Introduction . . . 138
6.1.1 Overview of quality methods for MDE . . . 139
6.1.2 Problem Statement . . . 140
6.1.3 Research objective . . . 141
6.1.4 Context . . . 141
6.2 Design of the experiments . . . 143
6.2.1 Experimental units . . . 143
6.2.2 Experimental material . . . 144
6.2.3 Tasks . . . 145
6.2.4 Hypotheses, parameters, and variables . . . 146
6.2.5 Analysis procedure . . . 147
6.2.6 Execution - deviations . . . 149
6.3 Analysis . . . 149

6.3.1 Descriptive analysis . . . 149
6.3.2 Testing of hypotheses . . . 155
Analysis of the MEM variables for MMQEF . . . 160
6.4 Discussion . . . 165
6.4.1 Evaluation of results and implications . . . 165
6.4.2 Threats to Validity . . . 165
6.4.3 Inferences . . . 165
The selection of *practical* methods. . . . 166
Detected reasons for choosing quality methods . . . 166
Representations as an important source for quality evaluation procedures. . . . 167
The need for a modelling context . . . 168
Perceived independence of the quality proposals . . . 168
6.4.4 Lessons learned . . . 168
The improvement of the procedure for making inferences in MMQEF . . . 168
6.4.5 The improvement of the documentation for MMQEF . . . 169
6.4.6 Improving the process of selection and characterization of participants . . . 169
6.4.7 Validating specific features of quality methods for MDE individually instead of all together . . . 169
6.5 Conclusions . . . 170
6.5.1 Summary . . . 170
6.5.2 Impact . . . 170
6.5.3 Future work . . . 171
6.6 Evidence of MMQEF applicability from the opinions of participants 171
6.7 Analysis of validity threats. . . . 175
6.8 Raw data . . . 178

7 The forthcoming research roadmap 179
7.1 The formulation of application scenarios for MMQEF . . . 179
7.2 The support of MMQEF to address the quality issues reported from industrial contexts . . . 180
7.3 The consolidation of operative support for the MMQEF . . . 180
7.4 The consolidation of a set of metrics for modelling languages . . . 181
7.5 The management of interaction issues in modelling languages (HCI of modelling languages) . . . 181
7.6 The promotion of MMQEF as a *Type V Theory* for IS . . . 182

8 Final considerations 183
8.0.1 Derived publications . . . 183
Journal article . . . 184
Book chapter . . . 184
Proceedings in conferences . . . 184
Technical reports . . . 185
8.0.2 Research collaborations . . . 185

A A multiple modelling languages quality scenario **187**
A.0.3 Application of multiple models 189
Business modelling models 190
System models 192
A.0.4 The first signs of quality problems 194
Semiotic clarity 195
Perceptual Discriminability 197
Semantic Transparency 197
Visual Expressiveness 198
Complexity Management 198
Dual Coding 198
Graphic Economy 199
A.0.5 Limitations of the selected approach to evaluate the quality of the models of the modelling scenario 199

B The process-delivery diagram (PDD) specification for the MMQEF method **203**

Bibliography **213**

Index **226**