


# Original Article: A Review of Studies on Organizational Excellence

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## ABSTRACT

The model of excellence of the organization is the most extensive tool of self-evaluation in the world and is the basis for designing national awards in various countries, including Iran. Numerous studies have shown that the use of management evaluation models such as excellence model has a positive effect on the performance of organizations. Since organizations must continuously evaluate their performance and formulate their future strategies based on these evaluations, among the many models designed to evaluate performance in this study, the indicators of the organizational excellence evaluation model were used to measure and evaluate the performance of the organization. The EFQM model was introduced in 1991 as a business excellence model that provided a framework for organizational judgment and self-evaluation and ultimately European quality reward, which was implemented in 1992. This model demonstrates the sustainability benefits that a superior organization must achieve. This model quickly attracted the attention of European companies and it was found that public sector organizations and small industries are also interested in using it.

## Introduction

Today's competitive market has undergone rapid and numerous changes in the supply of various and quality products and services, the main root of these changes is in the needs and wants of customers [1-4]. Therefore, in order to respond optimally to the abundant and diverse needs of customers and also to succeed in the market, organizations and production and service companies are constantly striving to use

appropriate and up-to-date techniques such as total quality management, Malcolm Baldrige Model Quality Award, European quality management, etc. to achieve their goals. The organizational excellence evaluation model has been created to identify the extent to which organizations achieve quality and superior performance and the growth of their awareness of the importance of quality and performance excellence under a competitive framework. The above model is considered in most European countries as a framework of organizational

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excellence and the basis of most national or local quality awards [5-8]. The main reason for the effectiveness of the European model of excellence has been its widespread use as a management system and the resulting growth in the field of self-assessment of organizations [9-12].

This model is a non-prescriptive framework and is believed to have many approaches to achieving sustainable excellence and continuous improvement. In executive bodies, performance is the main issue and effective management depends on measuring, evaluating, planning and improving organizational performance [13-15]. Therefore, over the past few decades, many efforts have been made to define the index and provide models in this regard. According to experts, the evaluation system provides a good platform for improving service quality and transparency of performance, which allows learning from mistakes [16-18]. And the storage of experiences and the volume of organizational learning increases and the percentage of errors decreases. Therefore, in 2002, the Management and Planning Organization of the country approved the regulations for evaluating the performance of the executive organs of the country and communicated them to all the executive organs of the country on 28/10/2002. Improving the level of productivity, the government has been allowed to award the National Productivity Award to productive units at various levels using the Organizational Excellence Evaluation Model designed by the National Productivity Organization of Iran [19-21].

Advantages of the organization excellence model:

- Having a systematic and comprehensive perspective;
- Management based on organizational processes;
- Paying special attention to the results obtained by the organization;
- Fact-based assessment;
- Extensive staff participation;
- Identifying strengths and areas for improvement;

- Providing a realistic picture of the organization's activities;
- Exchanging internal and external organizational experiences by using optimal mining tools; and,
- Using the self-assessment approach for organizational excellence [22-25].

Also, the model that is the basis for evaluating and awarding productivity awards and evaluating organizational excellence in Iran's industry and mining sector is consistent with the EFQM model. The National Award for Evaluating Organizational Excellence is awarded in the following categories:

- Manufacturing department;
- service sector;
- Health Department; and,
- training section.

It is necessary to mention that in Iran, the evaluation model of organizational excellence is known as the National Award for Productivity and Evaluation of Organizational Excellence and the award is given by the Institute of Productivity and Human Resources Studies.

EFQM is a self-assessment framework and model that drives and guides continuous improvement activities. Note that EFQM is not a quality management standard and is not an audit tool [26-28].

The organizational excellence evaluation model has been developed as a framework for organizational self-assessment, and organizations focused on continuous improvement have used this process as a powerful tool to achieve this goal. The members of the EFQM Central Committee are the CEOs of European companies who are elected for four years. The Executive Committee is composed of 20 members from the same organizations who not only act as the Plenipotentiary Representative in the field of total quality, but also submit the necessary reports to the Central Committee. The members of the EFQM Executive Committee are in fact responsible for guiding and supporting the strategies of the business operations plans, monitoring the progress of the plans, and finally formulating an appropriate general direction for the

realization of the goals of these organizations. Currently, 19 European countries are partnering with EFQM [29-31].

**Excellence Evaluation Model:** It is a management structure that provides progress and improvement by relying on the basic principles and concepts and paying attention to the main criteria of total quality management and self-evaluation system. As for the evaluation of the model of excellence, it is a tool for measuring the deployment of systems in the organization and self-assessment and guidance that identifies and determines the path of activity of managers to improve performance. Therefore, the key message of the excellence model relies on answering two questions: How this model is identified as an appropriate and rational management structure and who can play a key role in this chain of communication and interaction. In the first level of this model, general goals and in the next level, general goals are decomposed into quantitative and measurable degrees and scales.

On the other hand, the organizational excellence evaluation model is proposed in a situation where there are more than 70 national excellence models and 90 quality awards in the world, which are generally used by EFQM and Baldrige models and have converged towards each other. Global credibility for this sector led to the Ministry of Industries and Mines designing a global model for attention and action, models that had been accepted and followed by the international industrial community for several years. Increasing the level of competition in banks and financial and credit institutions in the world and the sensitivity of the customers of these companies has doubled the need to develop the programs mentioned in this section. This study evaluates the excellence of the organization based on EFQM.

### *Importance and necessity of research*

#### *Studies conducted in Iran*

dimensions of organizational motivation with components of history, mission, culture and reward system, resource management with

Ehsanifard (2013) focused on presenting a strategic model for measuring, managing and evaluating the effective performance of municipalities by combining two models BSC and EFQM. It was reported that the BSC Balanced Scorecard and the EFQM Organizational Excellence Model, when combined, could provide a good framework for performance appraisal, especially in urban systems and municipal performance. The two models, regardless of their important similarities, have different origins and can create a good overlap, so the model presented in this study to evaluate and manage the performance of Tehran municipal areas is based on these two models. According to the type of research, the research is applied in terms of purpose and in terms of the nature of the survey. On the other hand, considering that the research model and criteria extracted from theoretical foundations have been reviewed and finalized by expert opinion polls. Therefore, the research method of the present study is based on the Delphi method. In this study, in order to reach a consensus among experts on the dimensions and components of performance appraisal, with the final consensus of 32 experts, the statistical population of this study. Senior managers and experts in the field of urban management in municipalities were formed and exemplary individuals in the form. They were purposefully selected and the level of public satisfaction of citizens with the performance of the municipality was obtained with different components of the citizens' questionnaire at the regional level. The content validity of the model and its components was obtained using the opinions of experts and the relationship between its dimensions and components was quantitatively calculated using SPSS software, convergent-divergent correlation test and Spearman test and to rank the components of the test. Friedman analysis of variance was used. In the model of evaluating and managing the performance of municipalities and regions in the urban system, correlation and relationship between components of process management, financial resources and budget management, management of material resources, equipment

and human capital management (performance with components of staff level performance, program level performance and organizational level performance) and stakeholder satisfaction dimension (with components of citizens, urban community, employees, investors and urban service providers). It was approved with the level of balance in the performance of the organization and the balance in the performance caused the satisfaction of the citizens of that organization.

Safaeian *et al.* (2011) approached quality management analysis in semnan water and sewerage company using EFQM model. The subject of this research was quality management analysis based on EFQM model and determining the necessary solutions in order to achieve the desired state in Semnan Water and Sewerage Company. The purpose of this study was to determine the score based on the EFQM model and identify weaknesses and provide solutions to address the weaknesses of the company. The statistical population was the Water and Sewerage Company of Semnan province and the sampling method was random sampling. Data were collected by questionnaires and classified in the relevant table and analyzed using appropriate statistical methods (descriptive and inferential). The results showed that in Semnan Water and Sewerage Company, the principles of EFQM model have been considered to some extent, but solutions can be provided to develop and improve the company's score.

Mir Fakhreddini *et al.* (2011) presented a conceptual model of quality excellence for higher education institutions based on EFQM. This study sought to analyze the implicit relationships of the Empowerment Factors of Excellence Model (EFQM) in order to use it as a framework for management and quality improvement in higher education institutions. The results showed that the leadership and commitment of senior managers in the centers acted as the driving force of all processes of quality improvement and quality management.

Dehnavi *et al.* (2010) used the EFQM organizational excellence model in Hasheminejad Hospital of Iran University of

Medical Sciences. The study population included members of the EFQM model implementation team at Hasheminejad Hospital. The results showed the total self-assessment score in this hospital was 763 and the score of each of the nine factors was as follows: leadership 6.80%, policy and strategy 8.75%, staff 6.77%, partners and resources 82.33%, processes 9.76%, customer results 5.77%, employees results 3.71%, community results 3.63%, and key performance results 1.82%. Although according to results, the scores given by the senior managers of this hospital in the field of self-assessment of the world's healthcare organizations seem unrealistic, the strengths and weaknesses (areas for improvement) in the hospital can be identified. Considering these areas, it is suggested that with more education, the ground be prepared for a better understanding of the senior managers of this hospital from the concepts of the EFQM model. Also, more attention should be paid to the criteria of community outcomes, customer outcomes and employee outcomes.

Beigzadeh and Behboodi (2009) studied customer orientation based on the indicators of EFQM organizational excellence model. The purpose of this study was to determine the degree of customer orientation of Mehr Financial and Credit Institution of East Azerbaijan Province. In this research, the indicators of EFQM organizational excellence model were used. The statistical population of this study was all customers of the affiliated branches of the institute in East Azerbaijan province. The results of the study showed that there was a significant difference between the customer orientation of Mehr Financial and Credit Institution of East Azerbaijan Province in the current situation and the desired situation and the institution was obtained by 77.98% of the total score of the desired situation. Finally, emphasis was placed on the criteria of customer results and solutions.

Iqbal *et al.* (2009) delved on the application of EFQM Excellence Model with Proforma Information System Approach in evaluating the human resource management performance of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences. The

research results showed that the Human Resources Management of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences scored 516 points in this evaluation, of which 294 were in the field of empowerment and 222 in the field of results. The highest percentage of the nine factors were as follows: Leadership 61%, policy and strategy was 75%, employees 58%, resources and partners 52%, processes 53%, customer results 43%, employees results 29%, community results 55% and key performance results 52%. Proforma information system approach in this model led to the preparation of an information system of strengths and weaknesses in 9 areas in human resource management of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences. Based on this and using RADAR logic, weaknesses as areas for improvement intervention was made and changes were followed up.

Daneshpajoo (2008) dealt with the study and analysis of the performance of Sepah Bank through self-assessment based on the EFQM organizational excellence model. The purpose of the study was to obtain solutions to the problems in Sepah Bank. Data analysis after calculating the score of each of the model areas was based on the RADAR scoring model; this model states that the organization to achieve the desired results must have a suitable program and approach that is extended to the organization. And the performance of the organization in relation to the program should be evaluated and reviewed if necessary.

Rezaei and Shekari (2006) aimed at causal and causal model presentation with a focus on customer orientation within the framework of the EFQM model. They examined the three well-known models of customer satisfaction (these models include the European Customer Satisfaction Index (ECSI), the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) and the Christensen and Martensen Customer interviews and direct observation by the Board of Trustees at a university in Spain, using the European organizational model of organizational excellence approach. The results showed that this model in higher education institutions can well strengthen the university strategy by identifying strengths and

Satisfaction Model.) All three models showed customer satisfaction model provide a similar implication for the customer's benchmark of the European Quality Excellence Model, and all three converge on this issue. According to the above models, process criteria (criterion 5), community results criterion (criterion 8), personnel outcome criterion (criterion 7) and partnership and resources criterion (criterion 4) are effective in customer satisfaction criterion (criterion 6) and satisfaction criterion. The customer is effective in the criterion of key performance results (criterion 9).

### *Studies conducted abroad*

Edward *et al.* (2010) addressed EFQM Model: Managing competitive knowledge and advantages. This article focused on conceptual analysis of the relationship between excellence and mental capital. The EFQM model is considered as a useful framework for managing organizational knowledge. In other words, the EFQM model is a perspective review of the mental capital. Revision of logical analysis and academic literature are the main tools. The main purpose of this paper is that strategic management is a framework for achieving a healthy competitive advantage. In this case, the models of excellence are directly related to the logicity models. The purpose of this paper was to discover and determine the relationship between several EFQM criteria and the elements of the mental capital model. After reviewing the analyzes, the EFQM model was considered as a tool for knowledge management.

Blumer *et al.* (2009) probed into self-assessment of European organizational excellence model using a questionnaire approach in University Education Services. Strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement were identified through weaknesses. This model systematically and comprehensively evaluates the performance of universities and increases the quality of universities.

Bolusar *et al.* (2009) focused on the evaluation of the EFQM organizational excellence model as an inclusive quality management framework;

that is, the difference between social and technical issues related to TQM, the overall perception of TQM in the organization, the causal relationship between TQM methods and organizational performance. Based on the answers collected from the managers of 446 companies, it was determined through an organized questionnaire: (1) This model has social and technical dimensions; (2) both dimensions are interrelated and (3) these two dimensions together increase the results. These findings support the EFQM Excellence Model as an effective framework for TQM, as well as reinforce the results of previous research on MBNQA, and show that quality award models are indeed a good framework for inclusive quality management. Wali et al. (2008) examined important factors for the success of inclusive quality management in Indian organizations which used a questionnaire for people at different levels including general managers, quality managers, managers Human resources and production managers in industrial and service companies in various sectors are sent. The following results are summarized in this study:

1. Respondents in the three groups of engineers were 51%, process 28% and service 21%.

2. The 12 mentioned factors account for about 68% of the changes, the most important factors being: Leadership, creativity, strategy, quality.

3. The relationships between the 12 factors mentioned were highly correlated.

Finally, the proposed model of this research is presented, which is consistent with the actual operations in Indian organizations.

Another study on the important software factors of TQM implementation in Malaysia was conducted by Lou and Idris (2010). This study examined the relationship between important factors on TQM such as culture, trust, teamwork, online activity, training, leadership for quality and continuous improvement, employee participation and customer satisfaction/participation. Müller and Santag (2001) evaluated 17 health care organizations based on the EFQM model in Germany and

finally stated the average evaluation results as follows:

Leadership 58%, Policy and Strategy 45%, Employees 40%, Resources and Partners 69%, Processes 44%, Customer Results 55%, Employee Results 46%, Community Results 63%, Key Performance Results 35%. Zink and Smith (1998) investigated implementing the organizational Excellence Model in higher education institutions. In this research, the researcher, using his self-assessment approach, compared the academic and non-academic sectors. It was concluded that in the university departments, which previously used other models of quality assessment of universities other than organizational excellence models, the important principle of customer orientation, attention to other institutions of higher education and competition had not been considered, but the use of this model highlighted the importance of higher education institutions in addressing these issues.

Zinc and Smith (1998) in an excellence assessment study showed that a successful self-assessment is associated with long-term planning. And the practice includes evaluation based on the European quality model EFQM by workshop and proforma method, which was obtained from the self-evaluation of 40 researchers [32].

#### *Agent of partnerships and resources*

With a view to their core goal, they look for partners who will strengthen the organization's capabilities and ability to create value for stakeholders.

#### *Operating processes*

Processes should be systematically designed and managed. Processes are controlled and the quality system is improved. It is recommended that the employees be actively involved in reviewing, continuously improving and optimizing the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization's processes. A high level of stakeholder trust should be provided by identifying risks and properly managing them in all organizational processes. Processes can

be improved by using innovations to achieve complete satisfaction and add value to customers and other stakeholders as needed.

#### *Resources of Employees factor*

This includes improving work environment conditions, examining the factors that hinder commitment, loyalty and motivation and eliminating them, measuring employee loyalty and satisfaction. We need to provide the necessary prerequisites and contexts for employees, including a motivational, participatory and knowledge-based environment. Rewarding the good performance of employees will increase their motivation. If strong employees receive the same benefits as weak employees, they will gradually lose their motivation and become ordinary employees.

#### *Customer results factor*

To increase customer satisfaction, high quality services should be provided to customers and for this, employees should receive the necessary training properly. Also, various services should be introduced to customers in the best way. Therefore, it is suggested that customers be divided into different groups and according to the wants and needs of each segment of customers, appropriate services be provided to them, and due to changing needs over time, periodic measurements and evaluations of customer needs. New knowledge and technologies should be applied to meet customer needs. It is suggested that more customer relationship management techniques be used to identify the needs and design the services required by customers.

#### *Community Outcome Factor*

It is recommended that the needs and wants of society and social stakeholders be identified and these needs be met. Also, a positive image of the organization should be created. To improve the mental image of customers towards different organizations, including telecommunications, customer-oriented training for all categories of the organization should be continuously included in the work

plan, and committed employees should be trained to deal with customers.

#### *Key performance results factor*

It is suggested that by using advanced control systems and measuring market share and profitability indicators and comparing the indicators with the best in the industry, better results than key performance results can be achieved.

#### *Leadership Agent*

Managers should be available to employees. Further, managers need to take the necessary steps in meeting with customers. Transparent accountability to stakeholders, customers and employees is highly recommended.

#### *Policy and strategy factor*

Regarding this factor, policies and strategies should be developed based on anticipating the needs of customers and stakeholders and analyzing the internal performance and performance of competitors. Managers should also receive feedback from employees to improve policies and strategies. The policy and strategy should be reviewed and updated.

#### *Employee agent*

As for this factor, the following suggestions are proposed: Identifying the knowledge and competence of employees, and ensuring that employees are empowered to maximize their participation. Also, employees should be rewarded and appreciated and given attention and the performance of employees should be evaluated periodically and continuously.

#### **Conclusion**

This study was conducted to evaluate the performance of employees based on the indicators of the EFQM organizational excellence model and as it was determined, the total score of the organizational excellence model in the community is 514 points, which is at the level of the award of the organizational

excellence model. This level is a tough and exhausting competition that is designed for organizations or organizational units that have a leading role with a history of 3 years of continuous improvement. Considering the obtained results and that all hypotheses have been accepted, it is suggested:

Paying attention to all dimensions of excellence and promoting them in a balanced fashion is one of the most important points in achieving excellence, which can help in the correct scoring of the criteria of this model. The experiences of top organizations in using this model also show that in these organizations, teaching the principles of the model has been pursued very seriously.

Although all assumptions have been accepted, 3 years of continuous improvement are required to win the award, and that we need to strengthen our strengths in the competition.

### Research Limitations

This research, like other researches and studies, faced some limitations. For instance, some respondents did not have much faith in research activities and their results; therefore, it was somewhat difficult to have them cooperate.

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