

Appraisal of Boys' High Schools in Tehran based on Organizational Excellence Model of European Foundation in the Context of Staffs

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ABSTRACT

Objective: In this study, excellence Criteria of Boys' High Schools in Tehran city, Iran were evaluated based on the European Foundation of Quality Management model in the field of staff. Aim, was: need assessment of excellence courses for the mentioned school Principals. **Methodology:** A survey was done to collect the essential data and inferential analysis model was used. The populations of principals were 228 people and for teachers were 2260 people. The sample size calculated through Cochran's formula and obtained to 86 for principals and 329 for teachers. **Results:** Two-stage random cluster sampling method was applied and data collection tool was a questionnaire of principals' excellence, included: 5 criteria and 25 items in the field of staff. The questionnaire content validity was confirmed by management faculty members. Reliability was determined through the calculation of Cronbach's alpha coefficient and SPSS17 software, equivalent of 0.83 for principals and 0.89 for teachers and the questionnaire was distributed among the principals and teachers of regions: 1, 9, 11, 13 and 15. Firstly, the analysis was done by Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to determine the normality status, then through the one sample t – test, the research questions were analyzed. **Conclusion:** Results demonstrated that school principals had acceptable conditions with slight difference in all excellence Criteria. Finally, the study results were discussed.

1. Introduction

Appraisal of performance quality of organizations is an underlying issue that has been always considered because of its importance and application. Quality is the common subject of economy and management that is discussed in both economic and management books. Considering the limited resources and unlimited human needs, increasing population rate and severe global competition, quality improvement is not only a choice but also a necessity. Undoubtedly, economic growth and development of current communities highly depends on quality promotion rate of their products and services.

However, the current world is full of changes that create challenges for organizations. Globalization trend has made organizations facing transformations and challenges. Since changes are occurring rapidly, organizations should prepare themselves to cope with upcoming changes and transformations (Poorkiani and Khodaei, 2013).

Hence, leading organizations in current world achieve success through understanding organization's interactions, quality, qualitative human resources, and effective management applying modern management and qualitative methods and employing knowledgeable staffs; they believe that qualified staffs and employees are valuable assets of the organization that make competitive advantage for them. Humans are who keep the organization in competition scene as golden key (Ighbal et al., 2008).

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Nowadays, the issue of quality and quality management is one of main strategies of organizations in achieving competitive advantage and improved performance. Therefore, quality of products and services is the distinguishing factor and the most competitive weapon used by leading service organizations. Leading organizations are always trying to maintain top quality in order to obtain customer loyalty and promote their performance (Mohanty and Yadav, 1994).

In this regard, the human force in every organization and institution is the main significant basis that organization that paves the way for organizational goals; hence, development of every organization, even every society, directly depends on suitable employment of human resource. Accordingly, the most significant human management challenge is about adaptation of the best method to promote performance and efficiency of all staffs at different positions. In addition, organizations are now facing two factors of transformation pace and depth so that these two factors have changed organizational literature totally. The more complicated changes, the higher level of knowledge and awareness will be requiring in organizations to match themselves with changes and transformations. It is essential to be aware of strengths and weaknesses, and fields for promotion when making plan and strategy for future so that the organization can adopt itself to the changes.

Hence, organizations always tend to be evaluated and assessed in order to find their strengths and weaknesses; in this case they can improve their strengths and remove weaknesses to achieve excellence appraising a set of global criteria.

Organizational excellence models provide a suitable framework in which, strengths and weaknesses can be identified. Organizations, regardless of their activity domain, size, structure, and maturity, should establish an excellence system to achieve success. European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) is one of models using for organizations' performance appraisal. Organizational excellence models are efficient tools if are used reasonably; in this regard, they can institutionalize organizational values and concepts, strategic programs implementation, self-assessment methods application, organizational learning, and constant progress providing the field to identify the best processes (Jolodari Mamaghani, 2005).

Since extensive economic, political, and social transformations, human tastes, competition between organizations to attract customers, progress in industrial technology, complicated business processes, limited resources, the shrinking world because of communications technology, changing demands and expectations of beneficiaries have created a severe competitive environment for manufacturing, industrial, and service organizations and companies, any ignorance of business factors such as human force may remove them from competition scene. Qualified staffs keep the organization leading in competition as the golden key (Ighbal et al., 2008).

Since management is the foundation of every organization, management methods using in organization should be studied and compared the results with existing standards by managers to identify all managerial aspects of organization, eliminate weaknesses and promote strengths in order to achieve organizational excellence. All organizations need a model for constant promotion and improvement; hence, education and training organization that is an effective important organization should also design a model to define, facilitate, and achieve management excellence (Khayamdar and Zandian, 2013).

According to studies conducted in the context of applying excellence models, industrial organizations have a considerable contribution in this field compared to educational organizations. Excellence model of EFQM is not seriously used in education and training organization in Iran while there are more than 70 national models and 90 quality award and this model plays a vital role in industry sector of countries, in particular in leading education and training organizations (Sharafoddini, 2016).

Since EFQM model is the most prominent model to identify weaknesses and strengths of managers' performance, the addressed issue is that whether excellence quality of high schools in Tehran in the context of human resource can meet educational needs existing in these schools. Therefore, the most underlying objective of this study in examining application of organizational excellence model and its criteria to appraise human resource management at high schools in Tehran, Iran. Moreover, this study aimed at performing an initial appraisal to find requirement of in-service training courses regarding excellence of education and training managers. Hope that the results obtained from this study be used as a basis to design and perform mentioned courses.

In addition, some individuals such as top managers of and training organizations, principles of schools, experts in educational planning, etc. can use the achievements of this study.

1.1. Theoretical Literature

1.1.1. Organizational Excellence

Excellence means being extremely good with high quality and organizational excellence means sustainable growth and development of organization to obtain customer satisfaction and continuous increased organizational interest within an inclusive and supportive national space (Mirbagheri, 2002).

1.1.2. History of Excellence Model of EFQM

European Foundation Quality for Management was established by 14 leading European organizations in Brussels, Belgium, 1988 regarding business excellence of European industries improving quality as basic process for sustainable progress. Excellence model of EFQM presents a model of organization with leading idea and action indicating how to act in order to remain in competitive environment. EFQM is a voluntary framework based on 9 criteria including 5 enablers and 4 criteria related to results. Enabling criteria cover the actions of organizations and criteria related to results cover what is achieved by the organization. Figure 1 depicts 9 criteria of EFQM model.

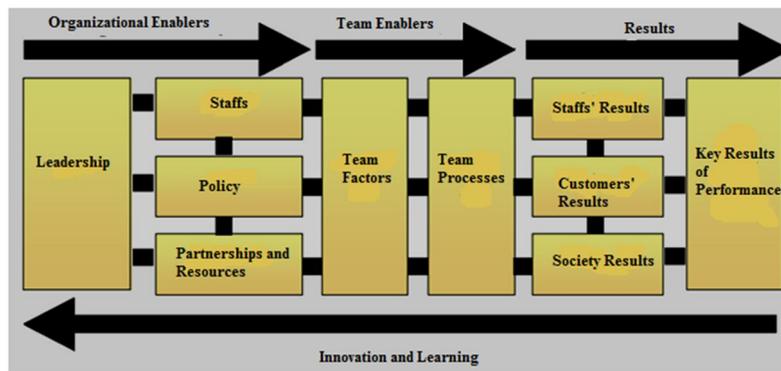


Figure 1. Excellence Model of EFQM (Reference: Najmi and Hosseini, 2006)

1.1.3. Self-assessment

Self-assessment is a comprehensive systematic review of activities and their results by the organization and its staffs based on a performance excellence model. Self-assessment process enables the organization to identify strengths and improvable scopes more clearly (Hadian, 2013).

1.1.4. Criteria of staffs' scope

1.1.4.1. Human Resource Management

Human resource management means making sure that staffs of an organization- its human resource- are applied in a way that the highest interest rate is gained by employer so that employees gain financial and mental rewards (Graham and Bennet, 1998, quoted from Abbaszadegan, 2012).

1.1.4.2. Knowledge

Knowledge is a combination of structured experiences, values, information, visions, and opinions of expert providing a framework to evaluate and combine new experience and information (Davenport and Prosak, 1954, quoted from RahmanSeresht, 2000).

1.1.4.3. Merit

Merit is defined as the ability to control environmental factors such as physical and social factors.

1.1.4.4. Enabling

Enabling is defined as a process in which, managers help staffs to make decision about affairs related to themselves.

1.1.4.5. Communication

Communication here means transfer of concepts. Communication is a process that transfers information of a person, group or organization (sender) to another person, group, or organization (receiver) (Zareematin, 2000).

1.1.4.6. Encouragement

Compensation for the effort of the person in organization for the time and force the person spent to achieve organization's goals is defined as encouragement; this is done to reward creativity and innovation made by employees encouraging them to use modern and best methods and procedures (Saadat, 2007).

1.2. Review of Previous Studies

1.2.1. Internal Studies

Khajeh and Salami (2012) conducted a study under the title of "evaluation of performance of Islamic Azad University Qom Branch using organizational excellence model of EFQM" and found the more optimum contribution of results with score 223 than enablers with score 229 in comparison between excellence status of scopes. In case of enablers, the highest score was related to leadership and engagement of staffs while the lowest score was related to prospect. In case of results, society results and key results identified as strengths of university and staffs' results obtained the lowest score.

Salehi et al. (2011) carried out a study entitled "study of functioning of enabler indexes of organizational excellence model in Education and Training Organization of Sari" and concluded that criteria including leadership, prospect, strategy, human resource, staffs' engagement, resources and processes had acceptable and optimum situation.

Hamid Lakzaian (2010) conducted a study under the title of "excellence status of human resource among principles of high schools in Mashhad based on EFQM Model" indicating low-level score of all sub-criteria related to human resource. Accordingly, human resource planning, knowledge development and merit, participation of staffs in affairs, encouragement and reward, and mutual negotiation obtained low excellence scores.

Ghorbani et al. (2008) evaluated performance of Shaheed Rajaee University in scopes of leadership and staffs based of organizational excellence of EFQM and found following results: in opinion of participants in appraisal, variables including mission, prospect, and ethical values in organization, interaction with customers and society, strengthening excellence culture among employees, planning method, and human resource management obtained low scores; variables including managers' support from organizational changes, encouragement of employees, mutual negotiation, enabling, and staff participation were at average level. In addition, organizational excellence in leadership scopes and human resource management in university was at average level; interaction between managers, customers, and society representatives was at low level.

Ghorbani et al. (2008) conducted a study under the title of "identifying excellence path in railway based of EFQM model" indicating low-level organizational excellence of in studied organization obtaining 144.66 score out of 1000. Obtaining 22% of excellence score in scope of human resource indicate non-optimal situation of resource planning and management.

1.2.2. Foreign Studies

Ghorbani et al. (2008) carried out a study entitled "extensive part of transformational leadership" to examine effective use of excellence model of EFQM in educational sector; they found a positive relationship between use of EFQM model in educational sector and improved financial status so that this model would meet expectations of beneficiaries and improvement of procedures.

Davies (2007) conducted a study under the title of "the role of merging and effect of academic culture in Britain University in role of effective implementation of excellence model of EFQM" and concluded that the more merging universities, the higher efficient implementation of EFQM model will be. Some aspects and dimensions are culturally adjusted with excellence model of EFQM and some other concepts and dimensions are cultural barriers to implementation of excellence model of EFQM.

Khaje and salami (2002) conducted a study under the title of "use of enablers in European organizational excellence model regarding higher education institution management" stating that it is essential to use excellence model in universities revising weight of criteria.

2. Materials and methods

This is an appraisal study in terms of performance but since this study aimed at examining the situation of boys' high schools in Tehran in field of human resource management, researcher made no intervention in research plan and did not manipulate any variable and just examined distribution of variables and differences of opinion expressing given situation of criteria of excellence. Accordingly, this was a descriptive questionnaire. Moreover, since certain respondents were surveyed through distribution of written questionnaires with similar questions between schools and institutions in Tehran, this is a survey study. Inferential method was used for data analysis; population size consisted of 228 principals and 2260 teachers and sample size obtained to 144 principals and 329 teachers using Cochran formula through two-stage cluster sampling method and questionnaire adopted from thesis conducted by Zahra Ghorbani (2008) consisting of 5 criteria and 25 items in scope of staffs. Content validity was confirmed by management experts through confirmatory factor analysis. Reliability was obtained to 0.83 and 0.89 for principals and teachers, respectively calculating Cronbach's alpha through SPSS17 Software then questionnaires were distributed among selected principals and teachers. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was implemented to examine normality status then one-sample t test was implemented to test research questions. Results obtained from Kolmogorov-Smirnov test are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for data related to research questions

Question		1	2	3	4	5
Criterion-scope		Management and planning	Knowledge development	Employees participant	Mutual communication	encouragement
Sig	Principles	0.145	0.302	0.671	0.18	0.325
	teachers	0.061	0.121	0.087	0.101	0.095
Distribution	Principles	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal
	Teachers	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal

3. Discussion and results

According to table 2 and relevant results to all criteria, since $\text{sig} < 0.05$ and both of boundaries of confidence levels of inferential mean is positive, inferential mean at confidence level of 0.95 is based on 5-point Likert scale and null hypothesis about equal means is rejected. Therefore, excellence status of all criteria related to staffs is optimum.

Table 2. Results of t test relevant to self-assessment of excellence in scope of staffs and its criteria based on assumed mean of 3 (P=0.95)

Scope-criterion	t	mean	Sig	Upper level	Lower level
Human resource management and planning	6.890	3.5814	0.000	0.7492	0.4136
Knowledge development and staffs' merit	5.904	3.5209	0.000	0.6964	0.3455
Employee participant in enabling and affairs handling	3.367	3.2814	0.001	0.4476	0.1152

Suitable negotiation and communication between manager and staffs	5.288	3.4256	0.000	0.5856	0.2656
Encouraging and rewarding staffs	20.761	4.1841	0.000	1.2975	1.0707

Table 3. Results of t test relevant to managers' opinion about excellence in scope of staffs and its criteria based on assumed mean of 3 (P=0.95)

Scope-criterion	t	mean	Sig	Upper level	Lower level
Human resource management and planning	3.463	3.1453	0.001	0.2278	0.0628
Knowledge development and staffs' merit	2.770	3.1204	0.006	0.2058	0.0349
Employee participant in enabling and affairs handling	3.223	3.1453	0.001	0.2340	0.0566
Suitable negotiation and communication between manager and staffs	5.173	3.2134	0.000	0.2946	0.1322
Encouraging and rewarding staffs	3.698	3.1581	0.000	0.2421	0.0740

According to table 3 and relevant results to all criteria, since $\text{sig} < 0.05$ and both of boundaries of confidence levels of inferential mean is positive, inferential mean at confidence level of 0.95 is based on 5-point Likert scale and null hypothesis about equal means is rejected. Therefore, excellence status of all criteria related to staffs is optimum.

4. Conclusion

Question 1: is human resource management and planning suitable?

According to results in table 2 and 3, both participant groups evaluated the situation of this criterion suitable. It seems that scores obtained from self-assessment perspective have been high. Naturally, schools' principles and managers that make plan for their educational entity look for problems in other factors not planning process. However, other societies and beneficiaries who evaluate results consider the observed results related to managers' planning method. Findings related to question 1 are in line with results of following studies: Salehi et al. (2011) that evaluated enabling indexes of Education and Training Organization in Sari, Iran; study conducted by Lakzaian (2010) entitled "human resource excellence status among high schools' principles in Mashhad based on EFQM model" in which, the criterion related to human resource management and planning at low level; the mentioned finding was not matched with study conducted by Ghorbani et al. (2008) that have evaluated performance of Shahid Rajaee University in scope of leadership and staffs as low and average based on organizational excellence model of EFQM. It should be noted that participant believe that many of school principals have minor authority to employ, promote, and codify job solution. Although the situation of educational organizations is not compared to industrial and service organizations, results have shown the extensive level of this issue in Iranian organization.

Question 2: how the knowledge and merit of staffs have been maintained and developed?

According to results of tables 2 and 3, participants in both groups have evaluated the status of this criterion at optimum level; seemingly, scores obtained from self-assessment perspective have been higher, but this is an odd issue since knowledge development and merit of academic persons has been stopped due to approvals of education curfew and weak in-service courses, and meaningless content of curriculums. Results obtained from this question are in line with results obtained by Lakzaian (2010) about the human resource excellence status among schools' principles in Mashhad based on RFQM model in which, knowledge development and merit of staffs was evaluated at low level; this finding was not matched with results obtained by Ghorbani et al. (2008) in which, the mentioned criterion was evaluated at low level.

Question 3: How is enabling rate of staffs and their participant in affairs?

According to results of tables 2 and 3, both groups of participants in survey evaluated this criterion at optimum level. Seemingly, scores obtained from self-assessment perspective was higher. Result obtained from this question is not in line with results obtained by Lakzaian (2010) in which, this criterion was evaluated at low level and study conducted by Ghorbani et al. (2008) in which, the criterion of staffs' participant was evaluated at average level.

Question 4: How is the status of mutual negotiation between staffs and principles?

According to results of tables 2 and 3, both groups of participants in survey evaluated this criterion at optimum level. Seemingly, scores obtained from self-assessment perspective was higher. Apparently, two groups of participants in survey have been satisfied with negotiation status between staffs and principles. The result obtained from this question is not in line with results obtained from studies conducted by Ghorbani et al. (2008) and Lakzaian (2010) in which, the mentioned criterion was evaluated at low level. The optimum level of this criterion is promising since the suitable communication leads to proper perception and higher trust as well as the constructive relationship between staffs and principles leading to promoted quality of performance and educational services, promoted internal and external efficiency of educational system.

Question 5: How Staffs are encouraged and rewarded?

According to results of tables 2 and 3, both groups of participants in survey evaluated this criterion at optimum level. Seemingly, scores obtained from self-assessment perspective was higher. The result obtained from this questionnaire is not in line with results obtained from studies conducted by Lakzaian (2010) in which, this criterion was evaluated at low level and Ghorbani et al. (2008) in which, this criterion was evaluated at average level. However, it not logical comparing encouragement method in this organization with other commercial and industrial organizations since income generation does not exist in this organization; while managers have more authorities in industrial organizations to encourage and reward their staffs and employees.

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