

Investigating the Relation Between Organizational Culture and Excellence Performance Based on EFQM Model in SMEs

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Abstract: Current study is to investigate the relationship between organizational culture and excellence performance based on EFQM model in small and medium enterprises of Bandar Abbas (Iran). The study population consisted of 249 managers, deputies and experts in small and medium enterprises based in the industrial towns of Bandar Abbas and 152 of the statistical population using cluster sampling – randomly were selected as sample size. In order to collect data, 2 questionnaires were used. These 2 questionnaires were about organizational culture and excellence performance based on EFQM model and their validity and reliability was measured. Analysis of collected data was performed using Pearson correlation test and also describing the collected data, was performed using descriptive statistical methods such as frequency tables and graphs and the frequency histogram by computer and SPSS software. Result of the study showed that there is a significant relationship between different kinds of organizational culture and excellence performance based on EFQM model. Finally, limitations on this project and suggestions for further studies have been presented.

Keywords: Culture, EFQM model, excellence performance organizational culture

INTRODUCTION

History has taught us that success of any company in performance is significantly affected by its organizational culture and as such, culture has been considered one of the crucial aspects of management and organization in recent decades (Mamizadeh, 1995). When a company sought to change its strategic direction, organizational culture can justify difficult and unresolved issues that companies are faced with. Appropriate culture, not only takes the shape of the spirit and elite foundation of an organization, but it also can be claimed that the success or failure of the reforms, revolves around the ability, sagacity and acumen of a manager, who can change the dynamic culture in appropriate time and in tune with changing strategies. Organizational culture has essentially an impact on the development of an organization. This should be also mentioned that organizational development has effects on the organizational culture, mutually. (Every organization, regardless of activity type, size, structure, or success in providing organizational goals, needs a model to measure and assess the success rate in achieving their business goals and strategies) (Moller, 2000; Rabinz, 2006; Roughani and Houmaiunfar, 2005). Excellence models provide tools for organizations to assess their status in the path

of excellence and balanced growth. These models help the organizations to identify the differences by comparing the present situation and the desired one (ideal or desired); and then, based on these differences and investigating their causes, they determine and implement solutions for optimization of existing situation. Excellence model or business competitiveness which is derived from European quality model or EFQM, is utilized as a strong tool for measuring the establishment of different systems in organizations. Hence, the purpose of this study is to understand the relation between organizational culture and excellence performance based on EFQM model in small and medium enterprises of industrial towns of Bandar Abbas. To achieve this goal, one of the most efficient organizational culture models by Richard L. Deft and one of the most complete excellence models (EFQM) has been used.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational culture: It is a new attitude that we have to take account organizations as culture (i.e., a system including members with mutual understanding and perceptions). Previously, it was thought that an organization is a reasonable tool that can be used to control a group of people and coordinate their business.

These organizations have official vertical levels, a hierarchy of authorities and such features, but the reality is that the organization is something more than these features. An organization has an individual personality that can be flexible, friendly and conservative or intimate (Rabinz, 1996). In an organization, the staff agrees on a particular pattern of behavior and this is the so-called organizational culture. Accordingly, organizational culture is the same conceptual system among all members of organization with consensus that makes the organization distinct from other organizations. In a more accurate analysis, this system consists of common concepts that are a set of special and key characters valued by organizations. From Mirkamali (2002) point of view, 'organizational culture is a dominant behavioral pattern among organization members that is formed with the values, beliefs and habits of the individuals and is supported by the majority. Stanley Davis define organizational culture as shared values and beliefs that gives meaning to the members of organization and has impact on all aspects of organization based on organizational behavior and performance, decision making/planning/editing of policies and strategies, motivation and job satisfaction, creativity and innovation, missions, commitments and goals of an organization. These patterns, determine different elements and components forming and uniting organizational culture and components such as: individual creativity, manager's support, enterprise dependency compromise with the phenomenon of conflict, leadership style, which play crucial role in understanding organizational culture.

Organizational excellence: Darwin's theory of natural selection finds the key to the survival of biological samples in accommodation with the changing environment and finds it impossible without the accommodation. Nowadays, this theory is true in all facets of human life. Very soon, management science perceived that organizations needs to be upgraded in order to enter and stay in competition with others and reach the level of excellence (Forghani, 2006). Organizational excellence are significant activities in organization management with the purpose of reaching results, customer focus, leadership and consensus, process-based management, facts and staff involvement, continuous improvement and innovation, common interests of partners and social responsibility (Najmi and Housieni, 2006). Starting up and designing organizational excellence performance models returns back to the comprehensive investigation of Western experts in 1980 (Razani, 2002). European companies are increasingly having adopted quality management as their main strategy to increase or improve position in market and obtaining financial results. In 1988, some of them who felt the need for adopting European movement in quality management were pioneers in establishing an institution called "European Foundation of Quality Management" (Zgitrie, 1999). European

Foundation of Quality Management is a nonprofit organization, which was established in 1998 by 14 accredited European companies. At present, more than 800 European companies have membership in this organization. Mission of this organization is to create a leading force in the direction of excellence performance and organization's prospect is shining of powerful European organizations in the world. EFQM excellence model has been introduced as the basic framework for assessment and improvement of organizations; A model, indicating constant advantages which are to be achieved by organizations (Najmi and Housieni, 2006). Those organizations which has reached the excellence level by using organizational excellence model or business competitiveness derived from European quality model or EFQM, can be utilized to measure the establishment of these systems in different organizations (Asare, 2002; Bhatt, 2006). Using this model, an organization can assess its success rate in implementing improvement programs in different time periods. This model consist of 9 criteria which are leadership, determination of policies, human resources, participation and resources, customer results, human resources results, society results and key results of performance. The first five criteria are known as Enablers and the last four are known as the results of implementing this model.

The relationship between organizational culture and excellence: Improvement and excellence are of the most important goals of an organization and every organization tries to traverse the path of excellence and reach its ideal and desired conditions. Before putting the foot on this route, to achieve the desired conditions, organizations must be aware of the present situation and the ideal situation and start to assess the existing conditions in the form of a comprehensive model and identify significant areas of improvement. Meanwhile, these organizations should mobilize all their human and material resources (Ghobadian and Woo, 1996; Hans, 1997). After identifying and examining factors of excellence path, steps should be taken to strengthen and institutionalize excellence model. One factor which has been directed by much attention in the recent years is organizational culture, since it has impact on many of the variables such as leadership, staff's ability, creativity, managerial competence and the performance and development of an organization. It should be mentioned that organizational development also has effects on organizational culture (Houmayonfar, 2005; Jelodary, 2005). Torabikia (1997) in his research, "investigating the relationship between organizational culture and job satisfaction in faculty members of Tehran University", showed that there is a significant and direct relationship between organizational culture and job satisfaction. Also, Mirlotfi (1997) in his research, "investigating and comparing organizational culture and its relation with the performance", which was conducted in 2 subsidiaries of the Agricultural Research Center, reach to these conclusions:

- Individual's performance is related to their perception of organizational culture
- The organizational culture of investigated centers are different
- The perceptions of individuals with different educational degree are different
- The perceptions of men and women are different
- Perceptions of individuals with different work experience are different

Hassanzade (2006), in his research, "Designing excellence model for service organizations in Iran", identify the factors and criteria of excellence model for service organizations in Iran and present a basis for evaluation of these organizations. He concludes that there are 8 efficient excellence models for service organizations in Iran, which are: Leadership, creative and innovative organizational culture, service strategy, knowledge management, organizational structure, service quality and customer-oriented staff.

Hypothesis of study: To accomplish the objectives of the project, 4 main hypothesis and 36 sub-hypotheses based on the relationship between organizational culture from the perspective of Richard L. Deft (including 4 culture types of flexibility, functionality, participatory and bureaucratic) and excellence performance based on EFQM model (including leadership, policy and strategy, staff and human resources, participations and resources, customer results, staff results, society results and results of key performance, which are not the indexes in this model) has been investigated.

METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

Considering the objectives and subject, the current study is a survey and library method research in terms of data collection, applied in terms of purpose and correlational or compatible in terms of methodology.

Statistical population: The statistical population of this project are among all managers, deputies and experts working in medium and small firms located in the industrial towns of Bandar Abbas which are, according to the statistics of small industries in 2011 and the announcement of the relevant officer, 83 firms and 243 managers, deputies and experts working in these firms. According to their activity type, these firms were divided to 8 groups: Food, chemical, metallic, cellulose, power and electronics, textile, non-metallic minerals and service industries.

Sample size: Cochran formula is used to determine sample size. Accordingly, the obtained sample size is 152 managers, deputies and experts. To ensure the

collection of questionnaires, 160 questionnaires were distributed which were later collected and analyzed.

Sampling method: In this study, a cluster – randomly sampling method has been used. Firstly, active firms with the same manufacturing or service areas of activity are considered as a cluster and in every cluster according to the number of the firms, a number of these firms are selected as sample size using random sampling. This means that the questionnaire's has been distributed randomly among managers, deputies and experts.

Data collection tools: In order to collect the required data for the study, 2 questionnaires were used. Questionnaire (A), which has been used for understanding of different types of organizational culture, consists of 19 questions. This questionnaire, assess different types of organizational culture in the forms of flexibility, functionality, participation and bureaucratic and is designed in the form of questions with 5 alternatives (which are totally agree, agree, partly agree, disagree, totally disagree). Questionnaire (B), which has been used for assessment of excellence performance based on EFQM model, consist of 50 question and is designed in the form of a four-grade scale weight (including totally exists, it has considerable progress, it has a little progress and not started yet).

Validity and reliability: To determine the validity of the study, the questionnaires of organizational culture and excellence performance based on EFQM model, along with the subject and hypothesis of the study were presented to 5 management professors and experts to comment on the suitability of the options and their appropriateness with the hypothesis. According to calculations made using the content validity, validity of the questionnaires was considered desirable and by reviewing the professors' comments, it was determined that the questionnaires had formal validity. To determine the reliability of the study, the questionnaires of organizational culture and excellence performance based on EFQM model, were evaluated by Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The obtained Cronbach's alpha coefficient, to determine the reliability of the questionnaire, was 0.735 and also the obtained Cronbach's alpha coefficient, to determine the reliability of the EFQM questionnaire, was 0.829. This indicates that both the questionnaires had acceptable reliability.

Data analysis method: To describe the collected data in this study, methods of descriptive statistics such as tables, frequency graphs and frequency histogram

for primary and secondary variables were used and Pearson correlation test was used to determine the correlation. All the statistical analysis of this study has been conducted by SPSS software.

Data analysis: The Table 1 shows the demographic and descriptive statistical data of 152 managers, deputies and experts of medium and small firms of Bandar Abbas as statistical sample of current study according to the questionnaire. In order to investigate the relation between organizational culture and excellence performance based on EFQM model, Pierson's correlation test was used and the Table 2 shows the results:

- There is a positive and significant relation between flexibility culture and the leadership ($r = 0.162$ and $p = 0.046 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Flexible culture and policy and strategy ($r = 0.224$ and $p = 0.006 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Flexible culture and staff and human resources ($r = 0.334$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Flexible culture and participant and resources ($r = 0.398$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Flexible culture and processes ($r = 0.297$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Flexible culture and customer results ($r = 0.346$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Flexible culture and staff results ($r = 0.337$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Flexible culture and society results ($r = 0.338$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Flexible culture and key results of performance ($r = 0.289$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Mission culture and the leadership ($r = 0.170$ and $p = 0.037 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Mission culture and policy and strategy ($r = 0.223$ and $p = 0.006 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Mission culture and staff and human resources ($r = 0.162$ and $p = 0.046 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Mission culture and participant and resources ($r = 0.313$ and $p = 0.001 < 0.05$)

Table 1: Demographic and descriptive statistical data of sample members

	Quantity	Frequency	Percent	
Age	20-30	21	13.82	
	30-40	60	39.47	
	40-50	40	26.32	
	Over 50	31	20.39	
Total		152	100%	
Experience (Year)	Less than 5	18	11.84	
	5-10	47	30.92	
	10-15	35	23.02	
	15-20	19	12.50	
	20-25	21	13.83	
	Over 25	12	7.89	
Total		52	100%	
Type of Industry (Society)	Food	69	27.71	
	Chemical	59	23.69	
	Metal	36	14.46	
	Cellulose	21	8.43	
	Power and Electronics	7	2.81	
	Textile	7	2.81	
	Service	11	4.42	
	Non-metallic minerals	39	15.67	
	Total		249	100%
	Type of Industry (Sample)	Food	42	27.71
		Chemical	36	23.69
Metal		22	14.46	
Cellulose		13	8.43	
Power and Electronics		4	2.81	
Textile		4	2.81	
Service		7	4.42	
Non-metallic minerals		24	15.67	
Total			152	100%

- There is a positive and significant relation between Mission culture and processes ($r = 0.278$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Mission culture and customer results ($r = 0.211$ and $p = 0.009 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Mission culture and staff results ($r = 0.253$ and $p = 0.002 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Mission culture and society results ($r = 0.163$ and $p = 0.045 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Mission culture and key results of performance ($r = 0.296$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Participant culture and the leadership ($r = 0.212$ and $p = 0.009 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Participant culture and policy and strategy ($r = 0.199$ and $p = 0.014 < 0.05$)

Table 2: Correlation between organizational culture and excellence performance based on EFQM model

Flexible culture of key results of performance	Flexible culture of society results	Flexible culture of staff results	Flexible culture of customer results	Flexible culture of processes
0.289	0.388	0.337	0.346	0.297
0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Mission culture of key results of performance	Mission culture of society results	Mission culture of staff results	Mission culture of customer results	Mission culture of processes
0.296	0.163	0.253	0.211	0.278
0.000	0.045	0.002	0.009	0.001
Participant culture of key results of performance	Participant culture of society results	Participant culture of staff results	Participant culture of customer results	Participant culture of processes
0.363	0.345	0.379	0.340	0.308
0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Bureaucratic culture of key results of performance	Bureaucratic culture of society results	Bureaucratic culture of staff results	Bureaucratic culture of customer results	Bureaucratic culture of processes
0.469	0.349	0.359	0.391	0.437
0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Flexible culture of participant and resources	Flexible culture of staff and human resources	Flexible culture of policy and strategy	Flexible culture of leadership	1st Hypothesis Test
0.398	0.334	0.224	0.162	correlation coefficient
0.000	0.000	0.006	0.046	Significance level
Mission culture of participant and resources	Mission culture of staff and human resources	Mission culture of policy and strategy	Mission culture of leadership	2 nd Hypothesis Test
0.313	0.162	0.223	0.170	correlation coefficient
0.000	0.046	0.006	0.037	Significance level
Participant culture of participant and resources	Participant culture of staff and human resources	Participant culture of policy and strategy	Participant culture of leadership	3 rd Hypothesis Test
0.396	0.249	0.199	0.212	correlation coefficient
0.000	0.002	0.014	0.009	Significance level
Bureaucratic culture of participant and resources	Bureaucratic culture of staff and human resources	Bureaucratic culture of policy and strategy	Bureaucratic culture of leadership	4 th Hypothesis Test
0.359	0.313	0.242	0.196	correlation coefficient
0.000	0.000	0.003	0.015	Significance level

*significance level 0.05

- There is a positive and significant relation between Participant culture and staff and human resources ($r = 0.249$ and $p = 0.002 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Participant culture and participant and resources ($r = 0.396$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Participant culture and processes ($r = 0.308$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Participant culture and customer results ($r = 0.340$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Participant culture and staff results ($r = 0.379$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Participant culture and society results ($r = 0.345$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Participant culture and key results of performance ($r = 0.363$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Bureaucratic culture and the leadership ($r = 0.196$ and $p = 0.015 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Bureaucratic culture and policy and strategy ($r = 0.242$ and $p = 0.003 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Bureaucratic culture and staff and human resources ($r = 0.313$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Bureaucratic culture and participant and resources ($r = 0.359$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Bureaucratic culture and processes ($r = 0.437$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Bureaucratic culture and customer results ($r = 0.391$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Bureaucratic culture and staff results ($r = 0.359$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Bureaucratic culture and society results ($r = 0.349$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)
- There is a positive and significant relation between Bureaucratic culture and key results of performance ($r = 0.369$ and $p = 0.000 < 0.05$)

RESULTS

- 1st main hypothesis-There is a positive and significant relation between Flexible culture and excellence performance based on EFQM model in medium and small firms of industrial town in Bandar Abbas
- 2nd main hypothesis-There is a positive and significant relation between Mission culture and excellence performance based on EFQM model in medium and small firms of industrial town in Bandar Abbas
- 3rd main hypothesis-There is a positive and significant relation between Participant culture and excellence performance based on EFQM model in medium and small firms of industrial town in Bandar Abbas
- 4th main hypothesis-There is a positive and significant relation between Bureaucratic culture and excellence performance based on EFQM model in medium and small firms of industrial town in Bandar Abbas

To investigate the four main hypotheses mentioned above, the relation of four types of cultures with different EFQM dimensions was analyzed. Thus, the relation between different types of cultures and the leadership, policy and strategy, staff and human resources, participant and resources, processes, customer results dimension, shows that the existence of an appropriate organizational culture and investing on this feature, will lead to the improvement of excellence systems.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

After analyzing the research data, it was determined that there is a positive and significant relation between dependant and independent variables in main hypothesis. Also, it was affirmed that there exist such relations in secondary hypothesis.

First hypothesis: Conclusions from statistical calculations of this study show that there is a relation between flexibility culture and excellence performance based on EFQM model. In a world with changing environment, excellent organizations are consistently and quickly agile, flexible and responsive to the changing needs and the expectations of the stakeholders, observe their experiences and perceptions and analyze the performance of other organizations. In these organizations, information related to current and future stakeholders are collected and used for determination, utilization and reviewing of policies ,strategies, goals ,purposes, indexes and short-term, medium-term and long-term programs. This information can help the stakeholders in accessing a

balanced set of expected results. Ghasemi (2001) believes those norms and beliefs are approved and strengthened in the organization that by utilizing them, the existing needs in the environment are properly identified and interpreted and appropriate reaction is showed in accordance with those needs. Fred R. David suggests that organizational culture is a behavior pattern formed in an organization, since the organization gradually learns how to solve the external problems, internal adaptations and integration activities. The prominent and excellent organizations continuous learning from the outcomes of their own and others' performance and activities. They are continually modeling and optimally searching the interior and exterior of the organizations.

Second hypothesis: The statistical calculation shows that there is relation between mission culture and excellence performance based on EFQM model. Monavarian and Bakhtieari (2005) believe perhaps it can be said that the most important feature of organizational culture is its mission. Those organizations that do not know where they are and what their existing situation, often is go astray. Successful organizations have a clear understanding of their goals and directions, so that their organizational goals and strategic objectives are defined and the prospects are outlined. Seyyed (2005) believes that the leaders are the creator of the mission, prospects, values and ethics and a sample of competitiveness culture in the organization.

Third hypothesis: The statistical calculation shows that there is relation between participation culture and excellence performance based on EFQM model. Prominent organizations, improve all their potential of human resources at the individual, team, organizational and management levels and benefit from it. They promote fairness and equality and have their staff participate in the affairs and empowered. These organizations support their staff, communicate with them and encourage them; so that these lead to their encouragement and commitment for increasing their skills and knowledge and using them for the interests of the organization. Monavarian and Bakhtieari (2005) believe that the organization has a shared vision of its future status and basic values that is made clear by the ideas and opinions and accompanies the mind and heart of human resources in its direction. Seyyed (2004) suggests that organizational culture is, on the one hand, the manifestation of the internal components and the expression of interactions, communications, behaviors, practices and the way members act and react and on the other hand, the index and operating demodulator of each organization. Excellent and outstanding organizations, have realized the increasing importance of intellectual capital of their employees and benefit from this knowledge. Denison (1990) , in an analysis of

financial performance over 2000 companies, showed that those organizations with high attachment culture and high participation had considerably higher performance than those organizations which failed to provide good attachments and participation for their staff.

Forth hypothesis: Statistical calculation shows that there is relation between bureaucratic culture and excellence performance based on EFQM model. Monavarian and Bakhtieari (2005) believe that well-integrated organizations are difficult to change. Hence, the integration can be an advantage to take into account for the organization. Collins and Perras, after 6 years of study and comparing 18 firms with successful backgrounds with 18 firms not much successful, conclude that the culture is the most important determinant of success is an organization. A culture where the staff and senior managers, are concordant and have a strong vision of the future for the company and wish the success of the company with all the heart. These 2 authors realized that successful companies have a 'main or central idea', value the special values and determine the staff behavior on the same basis.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

- Non-cooperation of some officials and employees of the medium and small firms in the time of conducting and collecting the questionnaires, causes some difficulties in collecting the questionnaires
- Subjects' reluctance in answering some of the questions and lack of fertile culture in the field of effectiveness and usefulness of such studies
- Subjects' lack of sufficient knowledge and information about organizational culture and excellence
- Budgetary constraints and the distance from the location of the research

SUGGESTIONS OF STUDY

- According to the obtained results from the statistical calculations of the project on the impact of organizational culture on excellence performance, it is suggested that the managers of medium and small firms in Bandar Abbas should deploy appropriate organizational culture compatible with their firms' actions to facilitate the achievement of excellence and continuous improvement
- According to the results of hypothesis of the study, it is suggested that the managers should seek to introduce their firm's mission and institutionalize it
- According to the results of hypothesis of the study, it is suggested that the managers should benefit

from all latent human resources in an optimal way and attempt to establish participatory systems

suggestions for further studies:

- Given that the research is conducted in medium and small business firms, it is suggested that this research be conducted in larger firms and the results be compared
- It is suggested that this research be conducted in a number of organizations with the same organizational culture and the results be compared
- It is suggested that the implementation of excellence performance in profit organizations and their achievement of profitability be investigated
- It is suggested that some organizations, by changing the dominant culture of their organization, assess their excellence performance before and after the change and results be compared

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