

APPLICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF TQM WITHIN THE FEDERAL AUTHORITY FOR IDENTITY (ICP) - UAE

Maitha AbdulWahid ALKHAFILI

Innovation & Change Management Post Graduate
Hamdan Bin Mohamad Smart University, Dubai, UAE

Maitha.alkhafili@hotmail.com

Afraa Mohammad ALAWADHI

Innovation & Change Management Post Graduate
Hamdan Bin Mohamad Smart University, Dubai, UAE

Afraa.abdool@gmail.com

Abstract

Total quality management specifically the business excellence models have been adopted and accepted worldwide in many different organizations, Likewise, these models' popularity and acceptance are continuously increasing in UAE and Gulf as well. This study aimed to analyze the quality and business excellence models adopted by the Federal Authority for Identity, Citizenship, and Customs & Port Security (ICP), which is an organization in the public sector and has actively implemented TQM and an excellence model since 2004. The study identified the success, implementation, and possible flaws present in the implementation of the model. This study design was qualitative, based on Semi-structured interviews. A total of 20 interview participants were selected and their interviews were conducted within a month and a half. The results of the interviews showed that the organization faced many challenges and issues in the execution of the business excellence model. Moreover, with proper coordination, Communication, and strategies, they successfully adopted the model and the effort has led to the winning of 70 local and international awards. Business excellence approaches of total quality management are very difficult to implement and frequently result in organizational failure. TQM is complex to incorporate into organizational structures; instead, it may require cultural stimulation, significant change, task rearrangement, managerial responsibility clarification, employee growth, and alignment with an organizational business plan.

Keywords: The Federal Authority for Identity, Citizenship, Customs & Port Security (ICP), Total Quality Management (TQM), Excellence Model, International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

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1. INTRODUCTION

There has been a great deal of study to find out why an organization strives for excellence. Most people implement those elements like economic globalization, free markets, rising customer expectations, and pressure from opponents have made outstanding organizational efficiency crucial for the survival and development of any corporation in a steadily volatile and competitive economic environment. It has been recognized that corporations may attain excellence if they adopt it as their management ideology, values, methodologies, and standards. This will help them accomplish the required results throughout the long, medium, and short term for future sustainability (Bag, 2020).

It has been discovered that TQM cannot easily be incorporated into the structures of an organization; rather, it may call for cultural stimulation, major adjustment, reorganization of tasks, redefining of managerial responsibilities, employee advancement, and convergence with organizational business strategy. As a result, a gap shows that the deployment of BEMs and other models as well as the difficulties of TQM practice may give the perception that TQM will not be successful in enhancing organizational performance.

1.1 Research Goal

Businesses that have effectively adopted TQM concepts and practices to boost productivity while boosting customer contentment and market dominance. However, it is cautioned that while TQM models including BEMs continue to be successful for several organizations across all industries, certain organizations may struggle to adapt these models to their unique contextual contexts.

In specific, it looks at the way these variables have impacted the execution of an excellence model in order to pinpoint any deficiencies and offer suggestions to ensure improvement. The objective of this research IS To examine how TQM and a business excellence model have been applied in ICP, to investigate the importance of the important key determinants in the successful deployment of an excellence model in a public sector organization.

1.2 Research Questions

To achieve the above-mentioned goal, questions are designed that are mentioned below:

- What are the primary influencing elements of a business excellence successful application?
- How do these significant influencing elements support and influence the effective application of a BEM?
- How are these significant viewed and applied in a public sector organization?
- How much do the main influencing elements have to do with BEM application efficiency in a UAE government department and what flaws do they leave behind?

1.3 Research Objectives

- To determine the critical success variables for a BEM's deployment in the public sector.

- To look into how the primary influencing elements are used in a public sector organization's BEM implementation.
- To research the impact of these elements on the BEM's application.
- To evaluate the importance of the main influencing elements and failure elements' presence in a UAE public organization in order to enable business excellence implementation.
- To determine the discrepancy between the primary influencing elements for BEM deployment in a UAE public sector organization perceived vs actual application.

The Australian Business Excellence Structure (ABES) and the European Foundation for Quality Management framework (EFQM) are examples of BEMs that are widely established and acknowledged worldwide. The EFQM has been used by many organizations in the UAE.

The study was carried out at the request of a UAE-based company as consultants and experts in quality and business excellence. As part of this study, we will examine the organization's quality and business excellence models, point out flaws, and offer recommendations for further improvement. This paper examines the Federal Authority for Identity, Citizenship, Customs & Port Security (ICP), an organization in the public sector that has implemented TQM and an excellence model since 2004.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Esgarrancho & Cândido (2020), businesses are embracing the Total Quality Management (TQM) managerial approaches by integrating their different functional units to enhance coherence toward value creation and satisfaction of customers' expectations. TQM promotes the view and definition of quality from the consumer's point of view; hence, practices such as innovation become commonplace as the needs and expectations of consumers are constantly evolving. Also, the business needs to adapt its systems and functions to meet such needs (Ali & Johl, 2022). Organizations must develop mechanisms and tools for creating, fostering, and diffusing knowledge to enhance the entrenchment of TQM and business excellence. The effort is crucial in guaranteeing innovation through participative attitudes towards decision-making, collaboration, and effective cross-functional teams (Calvo-Mora, Blanco-Oliver, Roldán & Perriñez-Cristóbal, 2020).

Lasrado & Gomiscek (2017) explain that innovation is the major driver which moves the organization from TQM toward business excellence. Innovation creates value for the customer, which guarantees higher satisfaction levels for customers and other stakeholders. The increased satisfaction among stakeholders is vital in ensuring the business gains from a sustainable competitive advantage in the market.

According to Bello-Pintado, Heras-Saizarbitoria & Merino-Díaz-de-Cerio (2020), the successful implementation of TQM and business excellence models requires a focus on creating a transformative

enterprise culture. Such a culture must focus on aspects such as innovation, employee morale and motivation, quality leadership and prioritization of continuous improvement. Nevertheless, there is increased flexibility in adopting TQM and business excellence models as organizations focus on developing customized approaches to their business management practices guaranteeing firm-specific competitive advantages.

Al Dhaafri (2020) explained that organizational excellence is the development and implementation of operational performance techniques that are appropriate for the organization as well as its environment. In addition, the maintenance of the process of carrying out these specific plans and evaluating them in conformity with complete quality control, constant improvement, and organizational learning principles (Al-Dhaafri, 2020).

Chavez, Yu, Sadiq Jajja, Lecuna & Fynes (2020) highlight that to attain business excellence, businesses must frame their learning on understanding the customer's lifecycle. Such understanding is necessary as it makes it easier to frame the needs of the different customers based on their location or stage in the lifecycle. Such an approach makes it easier for the business to determine the expectations of different customer segments in every stage of the customer lifecycle, making it possible to offer superior value to rivals in the market (Ali & Johl, 2022).

To guarantee better quality, the government of UAE has identified pillars and criteria of focus to guarantee the attainment of excellence in the public sector. Through the Government Excellence Model, some of the main areas include resources, data knowledge and management, partnership and integration, and government communication (Prime Minister's Office at the Ministry of Cabinet Affairs and the Future, 2019). Adopting such good practices in the UAE will enhance the levels of quality and excellence in service provision and increase the willingness of the public to seek such services.

The Deming model or cycle is one of the tools used to enhance continuous improvements in organizations. The model provides four stages, Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA), which should guide the continuous improvement processes (Prasad, 2015). Planning involves identifying the problem and the framework used to address the problem and the targeted results. Doing this requires analyzing the relevant data and implementing the solution. Checking involves the evaluation of the efficacy of the implemented solution and possible improvements. Acting involves implementing further solutions and recommendations (Prasad, 2015). When done iteratively, the organization benefits from continuous improvements. Jankalová (2020) mentioned that recognizing the fundamental TQM (Total Quality Management) principles serves as the foundation for achieving business excellence. In addition, business excellence measures can be found based on basic values, and business excellence can be described via dimensions (Jankalová, 2020).

Total quality management models, specifically business excellence is comparatively complex to execute and many times lead to failure in an organization. In this research the hypothesis that process management has a significant positive effect on organizational excellence. We will assess the ICP'S quality and business excellence models as part of this analysis, point out shortcomings, and provide suggestions for future development. In addition, this research aims to fill a gap in the existing literature that addresses this issue.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

The research's main goal is to examine how TQM and a business excellence model have been applied in ICP, accordingly a qualitative method to collect data was used. During the research, information was gathered from both secondary and primary sources. TQM principles and the Business Excellence model were researched using online articles, journals, and scholarly library books. In addition to a semi-structured interview with the strategy and quality department manager of the ICP. Using this interview method, we explored further and got opinions about the organization's strategy, quality, and business excellence. As the representative, he is responsible for establishing goals for improving the quality of services, ensuring business continuity, and achieving a competitive position. Moreover, we observed how they implement quality and business excellence in their organization, and a deeper understanding of the company was gained.

3.1 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS, DURATION, AND PARTICIPANTS

Semi-structured interviews were used in this study's research, allowing a particular set of inquiries to be created in relation to the business excellence events under investigation was conducted during the total duration of a month and half. This method gave interviewers some flexibility and the chance to deviate from the prepared questions and modify them to fit significant concerns that came up during the interviews. Also, it offered interviewees the opportunity to respond to the questions in any way they saw fit. Project executives and administrative unit leaders from the chosen ICP departmental divisions who have participated in the BEM development were the interviewers. Certain members of the application team were also chosen for their unique perspectives on the BEM execution in ICP. The interviews were intended to be audio recorded as well as extensively noted, with the participants giving their permission.

3.2 SAMPLE SIZE

It was chosen to interview 20, or around 20% of the total implementation team. The sample size represents their percentage inside the implementation project procedures since the selection centered here on managers as well as key specialists among the implementation groups. As previously mentioned,

the respondents were managers and employees of execution teams who had been exclusively engaged in the execution of business excellence. The selection technique relied on purposive sampling.

4. FINDING AND ANALYSIS

The following section provides the main findings from interview data with a Quality Manager in ICP. They have employed TQM with its unequalled achievements in information security, smart ID Cards, uniqueness, quality, and innovation.

4.1 Organization Overview

The organization was established in 2004 as "Emirates Identity Authority" to construct the Population Database and Emirates Identification Card Program. In 2017, It decided to turn its name to "Federal Authority for Identity and Citizenship." Meanwhile, the operations were changed with additional rules and conditions, namely citizenship Affairs, entry and residence of foreigners, and passports, as well as to transfer to ICP the terms of reference and powers assigned to the Ministry of the Interior in this regard.

4.2 TQM in ICP

This interview aims to determine the extent of employing total quality management and EFQM business excellence model in the organization. The interviewee stated that the organization is accredited to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 9001 family in several fields. These fields include Information Security, Quality Management Systems, Customer Service, Partner Relationship Management, Health and Safety Management Systems, Asset Management Standards, Information Security, and Environmental Management Systems. In addition to the "Risk Management standard" which has been added concurrently with the Covid-19 pandemic for managing risks and improving procedures. According to the interview, the organization is concerned with employees' awareness of TQM by conducting training programs and enhancing effective communication between the quality department and other departments to incorporate quality into all aspects of the organization. There are smart quality objectives and plans to fulfill those objectives, which are monitored by the quality department. They also have a clear operation manual about the organization's terms of reference, which comprise the required rules, regulations, and policies necessary for the proper organization and administration of the Department. An internal and external audit is conducted to ensure that ISO standards, quality objectives, and the operations manual are being followed to improve productivity and increase efficiency across the organization.

4.3 Risk Management Challenges

According to the findings and discussions, the most basic human interactions have been severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic due to draconian social distancing measures. Due to the highly confidential data of all UAE residents, remote work was only available to a very limited number of employees. One of

the most challenging points encountered during the pandemic was that several departments' procedures could not be transferred electronically remotely (e.g., if the case is transferred to the Judicial Department, the accused must be confronted face to face). Nevertheless, the pandemic generated new opportunities for them to revise all the transactions and achieve 100% smart transformation.

4.4 Business Excellence

ICP uses a business excellence model as the basis for continuous performance improvement, and they have won 70 international and local awards. According to the criteria accepted for the award sponsored by the International Excellence Awards foundation in the United States, they earned the Platinum award for the best smart application and the digital identity entry UAE PASS in 2022. Additionally, in 2019, they received several awards from Airports Council International (ACI) for being the best performer in Passenger Satisfaction at Smart Gates, second in the world for passport processing, and considering achieving the goal of passenger waiting time in line. Besides that, year, ICP won 3 local prizes by Mohammed bin Rashid Award for Excellence in Governmental Performance within the Sheikh Khalifa Government Excellence Program as a best federal Entity Award, Best Service Provider Award, and Best Joint Government Service Award – Mabrouk Ma Yak.

5. DISCUSSIONS

Over the past 20 years, numerous national governments actively used quality awards to support and improve their governmental and private sectors. The UAE government was employing its Government Excellence Initiative, which was built on BEM principles, to strengthen national capabilities on a worldwide scale.

Although interviewees identified difficulties with the simplicity and efficacy of the early implementation, opinions about the BEM's implementation within the ICP were generally encouraging. Notwithstanding these difficulties, the organization has profited from the encouragement of a culture of excellence, from adopting a methodical approach, and from realizing that the journey of developing quality improvement inside the ICP is an ongoing, iterative one.

It was stated that certain ICP members became conscious of the fact that taking part in the BEM procedure would assist the organization increase its process control and cost efficiency while giving it a chance to carry out benchmarking operations that would satisfy stakeholder needs (Carvalho, 2023).

Being a part of the prestigious award was indeed seen as having a high amount of status by some interviewees. Many other interviewees saw the organization's participation in the BEM as simply a continuation of the continual improvement strategy that the ICP had been pursuing since the early 2000s. This perspective offered a second systematic strategy that would allow process management to enhance

organizational performance and quality. Since 2007, all government organizations and departments have been required to participate in the BEM by ICP in order to promote the development of an excellence culture within the public sector. Because of their size and shape and the rigidity of their design, larger organizations are more likely to have initial challenges. Operational plan and adoption ease are correlated. The ICP ought to think about implementing the BEM in a methodical manner, which would include coordinating strategy and operational procedures, to address these structural problems. According to the literature, it was anticipated that the ICP would experience advantages like enhanced teamwork, increased employee awareness of quality, ongoing professional betterment, and creation of a proactive, flexible job role through equality, cost-effectiveness, and application of a structured approach, which would enhance services and increase customer focus. Interviewees reported that while the agency offered training and skill improvement, the organizational structure of the ICP evolved and developed to incorporate more collaboration and an emphasis on performance quality. Some interviewees discussed that the organization's culture has already changed because employees now are anticipated to act more alert and use problem-solving techniques; this allowed for the identification of employee empowerment because workers were prepared to take action that they would have earlier postponed to management. The interviewees claimed that the ICP had made measures to promote employee involvement, including choosing members of the BEM team members from throughout its organizational departments, guaranteeing senior management dedication and involvement, and offering engaging training programs and motivational incentives helped employees understand the BEM's applicability while also helping them see the appeal of taking part in the project execution (Upadhyay, 2020). The implementation must be evaluated carefully and, where appropriate, corrected through an implementation plan in order to maintain coherence in relation to organizational objectives at the assessment and sustainable stage. The elements are grouped together, which means they have their own cumulative effect, and the communication factor interacts strongly at every level of the project implementation. Using BEM involves a constant iterative approach to improve the performance of the organization. Communication across and within the organizational hierarchy is a must for all phases.

6. STUDY IMPLICATIONS

As a final remark, achieving business excellence is key to continuous improvement within an organization. Therefore, entering and maintaining this quality improvement cycle results from day-to-day individual activities (starting with top management and ending with operational employees). Our paper demonstrates that ICP has successfully implemented TQM practices. Other elements, such as social

responsibility, integrity, innovation, happiness and optimism, and teamwork, were also demonstrated to be part of the organization's acceptable values.

Although the first stage of the analysis mostly represents how ICP employed quality through the ISO 9001 standards and moved on to implementing the excellence framework. Using ISO 9001 as the foundation for a much broader TQM system would help ICP remain competitive and enhance its quality management systems. This is because ISO 9001 is an integral part of TQM, and the application of both methodologies simultaneously will result in organizational success and competitive advantage. It is evident that ISO 9001 can be used in ICP to create consistency and stability in the organization's operations. Moreover, ICP implements TQM to increase employee motivation and operational efficiency by delivering high-quality services.

Furthermore, ICP utilized operations manuals to assist in training new employees as it lowers the organization's overall learning curve. It saves time, eliminates liability risks, and enables the recording and preservation of the organization's limited expert knowledge. It helps enhance and standardize procedures, monitor each process, and ensure continuous improvement. The development and use of operations manuals has the potential to improve the capability of ICP employees to address the complex issues associated with their work environment. An operations manual gives guidance and direction for promoting communication, standardizing training, and assessment, and facilitating the development of clear policies, procedures, and protocols.

Therefore, future research should focus on the implementation of quality and business excellence in government entities in the United Arab Emirates and abroad. As a result, the government sector would be able to better understand and apply the EFQM Excellence Model and help improve the effectiveness and efficiency of government entities. Our research examines the implementation of total quality management and business excellence models within ICP. Although the topic remains open and should be investigated further in future research – it is related to the impact of the adoption of quality management practices and business excellence and their impact on the performance in a government sector.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The (ICP) has already developed various digital tools to provide high-quality services to customers, such as facial recognition, card readers, and alternative payment methods (ICP, n.d). The organization's goal is to become a one-stop digital shop that caters effectively to the needs of its customers. So far, it has plans to conduct training programs to improve TQM in the organization and thus ensure customer satisfaction and value. To achieve even more excellence, ICP could implement digital communication technologies using intranet software to enhance two-way communication between departments, leaders, and employees.

Considering that ICP is already ISO 9001 certified, it can use this tool to ensure that all processes and procedures are up to date and that information is passed swiftly and in real-time to all relevant parties. It should therefore invest in intranet software, which consists of a central portal where all employees can access all relevant information, documents, contracts, and communications in one place, irrespective of their location (Intranet.ai, nd). This will increase collaboration between teams and allow them to reach each other quickly and efficiently to manage, publish, search, and share content.

This solution is helpful during a pandemic such as COVID-19 because it will allow employees to work flexibly from different locations and reduce the need for physical meetings and conferences that can facilitate personal safety (Intranet.ai, n.d). However, this will require training employees in data security because ICP deals with sensitive personal data for its customers. Also, employees will need to be trained to use the new intranet software effectively to improve business productivity. In conclusion, implementing this two-way communication will improve employee satisfaction because they will collaborate better, and customer value will increase, leading to more recognition of ICP as a centre of excellence.

8. CONCLUSION

The key to ongoing development within an organization is achieving business excellence. As a result, engaging in and sustaining this quality development cycle is the outcome of daily personal activity. The results of this study show that ICP has successfully applied TQM principles. Additional components, like collaboration, happiness and enthusiasm, personal accountability, and innovation, were also shown to be parts of the organization's accepted values. Hence, it should spend funds on intranet software, which features a central portal through which all employees may access all pertinent data, records, agreements, and conversations from anywhere. Teams will work more collaboratively as a result, and they will be able to communicate with one another quickly and effectively to manage, distribute, search, and share information. The use of business excellence and comprehensive quality management concepts inside ICP is the subject of this study. The influence of the adoption of quality management practices and business excellence and its effect on effectiveness in a government sector is the subject of this study, even though it is still an open one that needs to be further explored as not all the areas and factors have been explored during this study. Future study should therefore concentrate on how to implement quality and business excellence in governmental organisations both domestically and overseas.

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APPENDIXS:

Appendix 1: Interview Questions

1. What is your name, and what is your position within your organization?
2. What is your responsibility in the total Quality and Business Excellence Model implementation process?
3. Does your organization have an implementation plan for TQM and BEM? What is the process of developing it?
4. Is your organization prepared and capable of implementing TQM and BEM?
5. What are the roles of the top management in the application and implementation of TQM & Business Excellence models in your organization?
6. Are there any actions taken to motivate employees to become involved in TQM and BEM implementation? And how employees give feedback on TQM and BEM processes.
7. What strategies do you use to ensure ongoing communication to support the implementation of TQM and BEM?
8. Is your organization measuring the impact of TQM and BEM implementation?
9. How can you improve TQM and BEM implementation by analyzing measurement results?
10. How would you rate your performance level in TQM and BEM implementation?
11. How do you implement TQM and BEM during Corona pandemic? and did you stay on the same performance level?
12. What were the challenges to TQM and BEM implementation during Corona pandemic?
13. Did you achieve your goals with the implementation of TQM and BEM?

14. As a final question, are there any other key factors that may improve the implementation of TQM and BEM in the ICP?