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Conceptualization of business excellence model with a grand theory approach

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to conceptualize business excellence model and identify its variables and indicators. The philosophical foundations of the pragmatic, humanistic theory of symbolic interactionism has been, quietly and the strategy of grand theory deal with open, axial and selective coding; whose output is a new concept. Data collection is based on documentation studies on excellence models. The population under study more specifically includes the models existing in prestigious journals and magazines with theoretical sampling logic in order to reach theoretical saturation. To measure validity, Critical Appraisal Skills Program was applied and to assess reliability, two encoders were used. Reliability was calculated to be 0.86 through the agreement between two encoders and Kappa coefficient for 102 samples; the reliability was good. For analysis, MAXQDA software has been employed. Out of 102 conceptual excellence models under investigation in the coding step, 869 concepts or open codes were obtained. Common basic codes were divided into 50 major categories in terms of meaning, which, in the selective coding step, led to the creation of five dimensions with the names of people, market, work, management and the underlying factors. The conducted study is a small step towards the extraction of indicators and concepts of business excellence from 102 classic models.

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INTRODUCTION

Excellence means evolution. An individual reaches excellence through work and activity. In the dictionary, excellence means quality with the highest order (Dahgaard and Dahlgard, 2007). In the management literature, the term quality has different meanings and definitions, including excellence, value, suitable for use, compliance with features and

attributes, compliance with requirements, flawless, meeting the customer expectations or more than that. These definitions are various aspects of quality and excellence. In 1987, some writers and thinkers like Deming, Ishikawa, Peters and Lamia supported the role and importance of quality as the basis and cornerstone of excellence. Other writers and experts, such as Juran and Crosby in 1990, focused on direct business needs. Jensen states in 2000 that companies should have a unique and value goal. Shaffer and Thompson argued in 1992 for the role of excellence

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in obtaining financial results (Sharma and Talwar, 2007). In this regard and in the search results, the number of studies conducted is one of the criteria for selecting the research topic and the large number of research shows that there are questions and full information about the subject. But this term does not adequately address the meaning of business and has been used frequently in every branch of science in which researchers have provided and evaluated models. However, excellence in any form leads to the development of business. Even many of the indicators of existing models can be used in businesses and lead to continuous improvement. The maturity model is a useful way to evaluate the processes and, in general, the level of business maturity. In common models, there is no shortage of a maturity model for a specific area in the management process of lean six sigma, which should be considered in the development of models (Albliwi et al., 2014). There are different models that can help the company for entrepreneurship, mostly focused on typical Total Quality Management critical success factors, such as staff, customer, leadership, process, management and so on, and a few frameworks pay attention to complexity and dynamism. In most of the models, what needs to be done for excellence is stated, but it is not explained how to do it. Research shows that 70% of the failure of excellence models in implementing special operating structures depends on the type and severity of that change. A solution to remove the challenges is the integration of excellence models with respect to dynamic and complex processes in order to guarantee sustainable results for all stakeholders (Amir Boboli and Reiche, 2013). In excellence models, most of the strategies are understood and applied with a static environment perspective and the strategy should be integrated in order to produce positive and sustainable results, which the gap in past research is evident (Balbastre-Benavent and Canet-Giner, 2013). Despite the widespread use of excellence models as a self-assessment tool in the past two decades, little is known about the basic logic that is important following the promotion of organizations to their criteria and it is not clear whether these scores are consistent with business realities. European Foundation for Quality Management model criteria weight in Europe (which is directly perceived by managers and is obtained through statistical analysis) do not coincide with the value that the promoting organization has given to

them, in its current version or in the previous versions. (Gómez-Gómez et al., 2106). On the other hand, after studying the common business excellence models and their dimensions, the question/hypothesis of this paper was proposed. In this article, the answer to the following questions has been of particular concern. What factors affect the success of Business excellence model? And what is the implementation framework for the success factors of Small and Medium Enterprises of Information Technology and Telecommunications Industry in Tehran?

Research background

Sireli et al., (2005) showed in a study that the first global business excellence model was the Deming Award which was introduced by Japan Scientific and Engineering Association. The next award, titled "Certified Executive Association", was introduced by the Canadian National Quality Institute. Afterwards, Malcolm Baldrige Quality Award was presented by the US National Institute of Standards and Technology and then, Australian Quality Award. International Trade Development Institute introduced standard as an international standard for recognizing quality management standard. The European Quality Award was created according to the European Quality Management Foundation's model. Most of them were established based on the Deming model and quality. Along with European countries, several countries in Asia also established quality awards. Most of them used the Deming model and quality as reference. For instance, qualitative models were designed by India, Singapore and Japan, the Philippines, Fiji and Thailand. Malcolm Baldrige excellence models from the US, European foundation for quality management model and Deming Award model from Japan were globally recognized and introduced as the mother of other models and awards. Rastgar et al., (2016) demonstrated in a study that Business to Business brand equity, social responsibility and reputation of the provider, brand preference and repurchase intention have positive effects on brand performance. The reputation and social responsibility of the provider also have a significant positive impact on B2B brand equity. Domestic suppliers can use the research findings for branding and managing their brand performance in domestic and international industrial markets. Akbari Emami et al., (2015) showed in a study that the

successful strategy implementation model explains the factors affecting the successful implementation of strategies and also their interactions so that successful implementation which is a function of the behavioral context is considered as the causal condition for the occurrence of performance-based behavioral competencies and the power for strategy implementation along with intra-organizational factors and relative stability of the governing context will lead to the final outcome, i.e. the realization of perspectives and goals, consensus and organizational agility. [Jahanian and Salehi \(2015\)](#) demonstrated in a study that the elements of Internet marketing mix are classified in two dimensions of common mix and "Internet mix". The result of the qualitative stage was determined with regard to factor load and coefficient of determination of each factor. Accordingly, "Internet mix" elements are more important than common mix elements. Output of the research qualitative stage was the conceptual model of internet marketing mix, which embraces all dimensions, indicators and factors of internet marketing mix. At the end of the qualitative stage, a questionnaire was extracted based on the research model and was used as the basis of quantitative data collection. Output of the quantitative stage was the Internet marketing mix model which consists of dimensions, factors and components of the model together with their factor load. [Madani \(2015\)](#) conducted a study and revealed that explaining 25 categories in the form of 8 groups including inspirational and perfectionist leadership, insight marketing, creative and innovative thinking, employee empowerment, deep recognition of customers, discovery of customer needs, active management of customers' changing preferences, relationship-based marketing, sustainability marketing, internal marketing, customer empowerment, dynamic competition, provision of superior services and multifaceted value creation for customers, knowledgeable customer, customer mental development, enhanced customer's citizenship behavior, perception of justice from the perspective of customers, brand credibility, customer support, creating corporate social capital, creating intellectual capital in organizations, building social trust, increasing the quality of life and creating social capital in society, which have been presented in the form of a paradigmatic model. [Afjeh et al., \(2014\)](#) indicated in a study that the organizational justice

model with an Islamic approach comprises 35 concepts (indicators) such that the identified concepts have been divided into three (variable) categories of distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice. [Asgharnejad Nouri et al., \(2014\)](#) reported in their study that with the application of the most consistent techniques for improving service quality, it is still not possible to completely eliminate the possibility of service failures. Minimizing the time gap between understanding service failures and compensating for shortcomings faced by customers in the process of service supply with the minimum cost is one of the requirements of responsive companies in a competitive environment. The main sector or company for service restoration as the leader and, at the lower level, sectors or companies existing in the service failure restoration chain as the follower play the role of local decision-maker. Therefore, a participatory optimal decision is made between companies existing in the service failure restoration chain, in which the main company of the service failure restoration chain as the leader interactively negotiates with other companies in the service failure restoration chain. A meta-heuristic hybrid algorithm was developed to solve the relevant model and with an applied example, the method of analyzing the results was also examined. [Hosseini Ghasr et al., \(2014\)](#) suggested in a study that most of the issues were allocated to three subjects: the role of education in entrepreneurship and employment, concepts and presentation of conceptual models, frameworks and entrepreneurship factors descriptively and personality traits and entrepreneurial skills. Hence, the methodology used in studies is mostly quantitative and of survey and documentary research type. [Dehghani Saryazdi \(2014\)](#) performed a study and announced that out of the dimensions of knowledge management, investment in knowledge management technology can be more effective in university performance. Additionally, the coding strategy is more effective than the personalization strategy for universities. Finally, an overall approach was presented to generalize policies. After assessing and identifying the stronger dimension of knowledge management in the organization, this approach introduces a more appropriate strategy of knowledge management for that organization. If the organization is stronger in each of the dimensions of knowledge management

process, knowledge management technology or knowledge management measurement, application of the coding strategy is more effective and if it is stronger in knowledge management culture or knowledge management leadership, personalization strategy is more effective. Arabshahi (2015) demonstrated that since it is believed that Islam is the most complete and comprehensive religion and God, as the creator of man, can better show the path of perfection and excellence to humans, in Iran and Islamic countries, one should refer to Islam and different Islamic sources to formulate a comprehensive model in this regard. Therefore the current study intend to provide an organizational excellence model with an Islamic approach to extent by referring to Islamic sources and taking advantage of the holy Quran verses and sermons and letters and wisdom of Nahj al-Balaghah. Hajian et al., (2013) carried out a study and indicated that the proposed model came about with two aspects of empowerment and results, 9 main categories, 31 subcategories, and 24 indicators relating to results. Then, questionnaires were distributed, and the opinions of the experts were collected to weighting and prioritizing the aspects and categories according to group AHP. Subcategories and indicators were classified directly by calculating the numerical means. Finally, one of the nonindustrial research centers was selected to be studied according to the proposed model. Delkhosh Kasmaei (2012) observed that a conceptual model was designed while considering four variables of “servant leadership (independent variable), organizational excellence of university (dependent variable), leader-follower relationship and organizational culture (mediating variables)”. Mirsapasi et al., (2012) conducted a study and stated that in the path of promoting excellence, an appropriate and effective approach is the application of national quality awards. Use of national quality awards leads to improved quality, profit, processes, performance of providers, competitiveness and employee morale. They have demonstrated that the organizational excellence model in the public sector has ten core values which have been divided into three areas of human dignity, knowledge-based-ness and vision-based-ness. Khodadad Hoseini et al., (2011) suggested in a study that core excellence values comprise market orientation, social and ethical responsibility of marketing, marketing efficiency, learning and continuous improvement, focus on

results, marketing value creation and also determination of marketing excellence criteria including market-oriented leadership, market analysis and understanding, marketing strategy, marketing infrastructure, marketing mix and marketing outcomes. Besides, the sub-criteria related to each of the excellence criteria were identified and conceptual relationships between them and how to realize marketing results. Arabi and Mostafavi (2011) showed in a study that the coordinated model of production strategy is approved and it was determined that the companies with a harmonious combination of production, business and marketing strategies have better performance. Kabaranzad Qadim et al., (2015) showed in a study that the government’s financial support from industry has not been successful from the viewpoint of successful small and medium-sized enterprises managers and the rest of the aforementioned supportive policies. Evaluation of the gaps between the existing and the ideal situation disclosed that only financial support policies have been somewhat close to the ideal situation. So, attempt has been made to make the necessary suggestions using content analysis approach for the effectiveness of the future medium-term plans. Zagardi and Esmaili (2010) demonstrated that organization size can influence the depth of implementation of information technology systems and organizational excellence model. Moreover, Iranian organizations that have widely benefited from information technology have been more successful in better application of organizational excellence model and achievement of higher scores in this model.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research values are biased and in philosophical foundations, this research has been carried out with a “critical” notion and school of “symbolic interaction”. The research method used according to the type of data is qualitative based on the grounded theory of the population structure with meta-synthesis strategy and text content analysis. Also, this research is a developmental and fundamental study in terms of conclusion and a developmental study in terms of purpose, and a sequential transformative mixed design has been used in this study. With the aim of identifying and constructing a conceptual model of business excellence and exploratory nature of qualitative data, the qualitative research method

of meta-synthesis has been used to develop the theory, which examines the information and findings extracted from other qualitative studies related to the subject. As a result, the desired sample for meta-synthesis is taken from qualitative studies selected based on their relationship with the research question. Content analysis is considered among the qualitative research strategies. Thus, it can be said that content analysis is applied to any inferential method that is used regularly and objectively in order to determine the features of messages. In this method, messages or information are coded and classified such that the researcher can analyze them quantitatively (Delavare, 2010). The research data collection is based on the study of documents on a specific subject. Therefore, the examined population of the studies conducted is related to business excellence models. This population, more specifically, includes the models published in prestigious national and international journals. The sampling logic is theoretical. (Fig. 1) Theoretical sampling based on non-limitation of samples continues until categories reach theoretical

saturation. From among different views in validity measurement, the most general and the most common method has been used. Long involvement refers to when the research has been carried out for a long time (Hooman, 2006). An agreement between two encoders is used to measure reliability, meaning that in addition to the researcher who has made the initial coding, another encoder will do this separately and without knowing the researcher's codes. If the codes of the two researchers are close together, this indicates high agreement between the two coders, which represents reliability. To calculate the coefficient of agreement between two encoders, Kappa coefficient has been employed (Cohen, 1960). The Cohen's kappa is a statistical coefficient (Eq. 1) that represents the degree of accuracy and reliability in a statistical classification. It measures the agreement between two raters (judges) who each classify items into mutually exclusive categories. The results of the coefficient was equal to 0.866 for 110 samples (Fig. 2) and the significant number for acceptance was 0.001; hence, the coding reliability was approved (Mosa Khani et al., 2014).

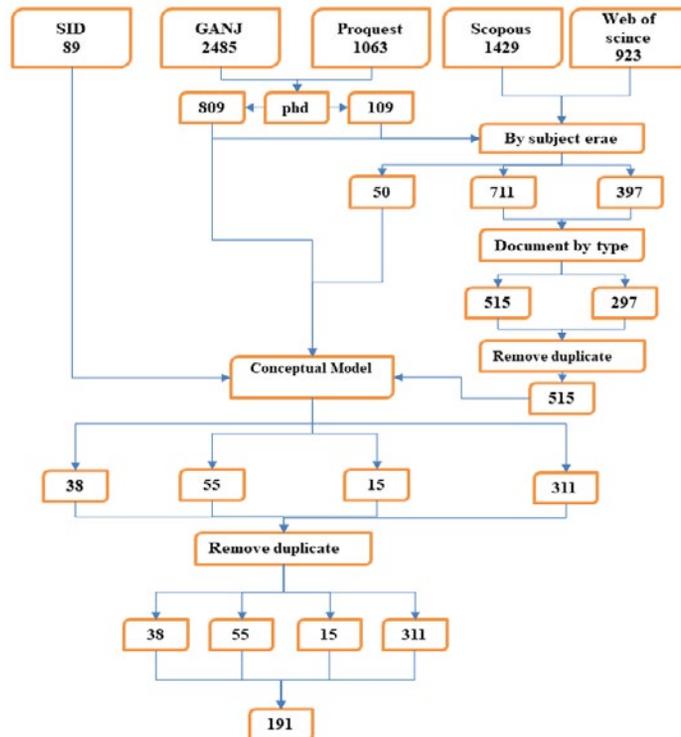


Fig. 1: Search results and selection of appropriate articles

$$k = \frac{P_o - P_e}{1 - p_e} \quad (1)$$

| | | |
|--|-----|-----|
| Both judges agree to include | 869 | (2) |
| Both judges agree to exclude | 20 | |
| Only the first judge wants to include | 5 | |
| Only the second judge wants to include | 1 | |

Based on the foregoing and use of meta-synthesis technique, a total of 110 excellence models were identified. To facilitate the qualitative data process using text content analysis, MAXQDA software has been applied (Oliveira et al., 2013). According to experts, in open coding, the researcher freely engages in naming the concepts (or codes) and does not limit the codes (Mansourian, 2006).

Content analysis

In content analysis of open coding in two stages, a total of 869 concepts or open codes were initially obtained from 102 conceptual excellence models through qualitative coding. Since key indicators are those agreed by experts of the organization offering them, frequency of indicators in models is an appropriate criterion for determining the main indicators of open coding. It should be noted that the frequency of indicators in models is determined by their definitions, meaning that if the two indicators have different titles but similar definitions, then those two indicators are assumed to be the same. Afterwards, semantically common and similar concepts (initial codes) were classified in the form of 50 major categories based on frequency. In the final stage of coding, since the main component of the theory is gradually showing itself, the researcher acts more selectively in the coding job on the basis of these emerging components. Thereby, the final coding stage is called "selective" (Hsieh et al., 2005). The current study has been carried out in Tehran- Iran in 2019.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the present study, grounded theory was used as the analysis strategy. In the first stage, meta-synthesis method has been applied to compare, interpret,

convert and combine different model frameworks offered in the field of business excellence. At this stage, dimensions and components (in the population under investigation) were determined and identified in databases, journals, conferences and various search engines. Research questions, keywords and search resources were answered to complete the research. Initially, the studies conducted on the extraction of key indicators are revealed with the aid of meta-synthesis method and literature review. Access to world-class experts was not possible, Knowledge and information of authentic and international models are used as expert opinions to build the framework of key indicators. To this end, international models are initially investigated and 102 authentic models are selected with respect to the following three criteria: scientific backing of the model, frequency and experience of using the model in different countries and indicator availability. In the following, only three major models have been considered and based on the preliminary studies, 102 business excellence models in 7 categories (strategy and organization/ finance and governance/ sales and marketing/ supply chain and logistics/ innovation and technology/ leadership, change and human resources/ information technology) were identified and examined in Table 1.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In content analysis of open coding in two stages, a total of 869 concepts or open codes were initially obtained from 102 conceptual excellence models through qualitative coding. Since key indicators are those agreed by experts of the organization offering them, frequency of indicators in models is an appropriate criterion for determining the main indicators of open coding. It should be noted that the frequency of indicators in models is determined by their definitions, meaning that if the two indicators have different titles but similar definitions, then those two indicators are assumed to be the same. Afterwards, semantically common and similar concepts (initial codes) were classified in the form of 50 major categories based on frequency. Table 2.

In the selective coding stage, the selected category and the relationship between all major categories revolving around the core category should be examined and then, the grounded model should be designed based on the story line. Five

main criteria of the model consist of people, market, underlying factors, management and work, placed on the circumference of a circle, which represents the model continuity thinking. Inside the circle is called internal business environment and its outside is called external business environment.

Criterion of people

It comprises 5 sub-criteria of staff, leadership, suppliers, partners and customer.

Criterion of market: It includes 6 sub-criteria

of quality, services and products, finance, brand, marketing and competition.

Criterion of underlying factors

It covers 12 sub-criteria of skill and resources, value, knowledge, maturity, development, improvement and technology, agility, stability and innovation.

Criterion of management

It consists of 3 sub-criteria of control, organization and structure and planning and strategy.

Table 1: Categorization of Finding Meta Synthesis

| No. | Category | Business excellence models |
|-----|--|---|
| 1 | Zstrategy and organization | Prince 2 project management (Bentley,2015), canvas model (Osterwalder and Pigneur,2010), Porter’s five forces framework of excellence (Porter, 2008), Hoshin Kanri strategy deployment (Yoji Akao, 2004), excellence diamond model (Hassanzadeh et al.,2004), OPM3 organizational project management maturity model (Andersen and Jessen, 2003), Australian Excellence Model (Council, 2002), Singapore Excellence model (Lee, 2002), PwC outsourcing model (O’Rourke, 2000), European Performance Excellence Model (Nabitz, 1999), Kanji Business Excellence Measurement System (Kanji, 1998), Greiner growth model (Greiner, 1997), PMBOK project management body of knowledge (PMI, 2013), string values (Treacy and Wiersema,1993), 3C triangle strategy (Ohmae, 1989), Canadian Excellence Model(Laszlo, 1997), Harvard strategic human resource model (Beer, 1984), McKinsey 7-S framework (Waterman et al., 1980), Malcolm Baldrige (Wilson and David, 2000), Boston Consulting Group matrix (Morrison and Robin, 1991), SWOT analysis (Learned, 1969), PEST macro environment analysis (Aguilar,1967), Ansoff growth matrix(Ansoff, 1987), value chain model (Porter, 1985) |
| 2 | Finance and governance | COBIT 5 (Tuttle and Scott, 2007), management by objectives (Drucker, 2012), APQC process classification framework (Hoyle, 2017), Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan and David,1992), DuPont analysis (Breally, 1991), Xerox sales and marketing benchmark (Camp, 1989), activity-based costing (Kaplan, 1988) |
| 3 | Sales, marketing and brand | Monetary brand valuation technique- ISO 10668 process (Narayan, 2012), pentagram branding (Becker et al., 1998), brand dynamics pyramid (Dyson et al., 1996), 4 p’s marketing (Kotler and Keller, 2006), brand asset valuation (Young and Rubicam, 2000), working pyramid (Curry, and Curry, 2002), general electric model of MABA analysis (Mitchell et al., 2000), brand personality (Aaker, 1997), Interbrand method (Aaker, 1996), power/interest stakeholders classification matrix(Haigh, David and Perrier,1997), 5-factor model (Aaker, 1996), customer-based brand equity (CBBE) model or Keller’s model(Keller,1993), Strategic Brand Management (Kapferer, 1994), brand equity and brand name (Aaker, 1991), discount rate, growth rate and useful life (Brealey and Myers, 1991), 4 p’s marketing(McCarthy, 1960) |
| 4 | Supply chain and logistics | Total Quality Management (Gibson, 1978), Five Principles of Lean (Bicheno and Matthias, 2000), house of gemba (Imai, 2007), customer operations performance center standard (Payne, 2012), business process reengineering (Hammer, 1990), 6 sigma (Pena, 1990), error correction process (Shingo, 2019), TPS agile management model(Ohno,1988), agile maturity model (Humphrey, 1988), rater model (Parasuraman, 1988), 5S model (Hirano, 1988),Shingo model for operational excellence(Edgeman,2018), total productive maintenance (TPM) model(Nakajima, 1988), ISO 9001quality management system (Hoyle, 2017), Kano model (Kano, 1992), Kraljic purchasing model (Kraljic, 1983), training within industry (Breen, 2002) |
| 5 | Innovation and technology | Blue ocean strategy (Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne, 2005), disruptive innovation model (Christensen et al., 2015), design thinking model (Buchanan, 1992), cyclic innovation model(Pearce and Kerry, 1990), step-gate model (Cooper et al., 1986), six thinking hats (De Bono, 1985) |
| 6 | Leadership, change and human resources | ADKAR change management model(Hiatt, 2006), AHRI excellence model (Ulrich, 2012), ATD competitive model (Mirabile, 1997), Beer and Nuria theory (Beer, 2015), Belbin model (Belbin, 1970), Bridge transmission model (Bridges, 2000), Covey seven effective habits (Covey, 1989), time management matrix (Covey, 1995), Deming cycle (Deming, 1986), Kaizen (Masaaki, 1986), Mental competency framework (Goleman, 1998), four steps of the partnership model (Lindgreen et al, 2004), Hofstede’s cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 1984), IMPA competency model (Bernthal, 2004), Kotter’s eight-step change model (Kotter, 1996), Lencioni five dysfunctions of a team (Lencioni, 2006), Lewin’s three-stage model (Lewin, 1946), core quadrant model (Ofman, 2004), employee capability maturity model(Curtis, 2002), Peter Senge’s five commands (Senge, 2014), talent management framework (Chambers,1998), Tuckman’s stages of team development model (Tuckman, 1965), competition model (Collin, 1989), Ulrich’s five rules to lead(Ulrich et al., 2009). |
| 7 | Information technology | Capability Maturity Model Integration (Team, CMMI, 2002), agile model (Ambler, 2002), E-sourcing capability model for service providers (Hyder, 2010), ISO 15504 (Mesquida, 2012), information security management ISO 27001 (Fenz, 2007), information technology infrastructure library (Conger, 2008.), agile leverage to eliminate waste (Corbett, 2007), stages of IT systems (Nolan, 1995), to gaf (Version, 2009) |

Conceptualization of business excellence model

Table 2: Categorization of Finding Content analysis

| Major (final) categories | Main concepts |
|--------------------------|---|
| People | Customer, staff, leadership, suppliers, partners, people |
| Market | Market, services and products, finance, brand, marketing, competition, quality, market forces |
| Work | Work, operation, activity, process, system, performance |
| Management | Management, style, delegation, planning, strategy, organization and structure, execution and implementation, control, evaluation and review |
| Underlying factors | Knowledge and skill, maturity, focus, improvement, agility, stability, resources, value, innovation, development, technology |

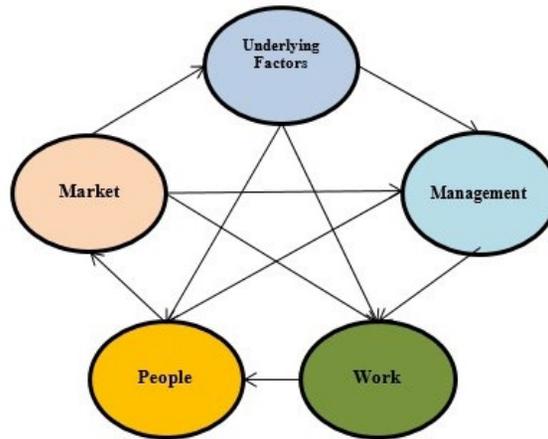


Fig. 2: business excellence model

Criterion of work

It embraces 3 sub-criteria of operation, activity and performance

The five criteria have a causal relationship. But the more important point about the underlying criteria is that they are like a place that has the duty of receiving messages (request and need) from people and market and decoding and sending the message to management and labor. Besides, to meet the needs and requests, the existence of at least underlying sub-criteria is required and if they do not exist, they must come about. In the end, product and service are delivered to this place to investigate whether they overlap the needs and requests. The percentage of overlapping shows the rate of business excellence (Fig. 2).

To finalize the study, the following suggestions are provided with the aim of developing and applying its achievements:

- The conducted study is a small step towards the extraction of indicators and concepts of

business excellence from 102 classic models. Thus, interested researchers and scholars are recommended to benefit from the rich resources of articles to extract business excellence theories with a grand theory approach.

- In this study, business excellence indicators with a grand theory approach were measured but were not tested in any specific business and statistical population. Hence, other researchers are suggested to study, evaluate and test these indicators in businesses.
- Considering that the approach used in this study is the grand theory and the model has been examined and extracted only through content analysis, it is suggested that the validity of the model be examined and analyzed for validation and operational review of the model using quantitative tests and structural equation system.
- In addition to the above cases, given that based on the conceptual model, this research is a wide variety of business excellence, it is suggested

that a tool be designed for measuring business excellence and business status be compared with industry benchmarks through gap analysis so that a solution is proposed to reduce the distance between business and the degree of complication.

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CONFLICT OF INTREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this manuscript. In addition, the ethical issues, including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, and redundancy has been completely observed by the author.

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