

Excellence DNA: A Practical Framework for Organizational Excellence

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Abstract

Organizations are seeking perfection in their products/services and processes to meet and exceed customers' expectations. Quality awards, excellence models, or excellence frameworks are considered essential tools to support organizations in achieving their targets. However, the literature analysis revealed that the Organizational Excellence Methodologies (OEMs) have six major gaps. The analysis showed that there is a lack of understanding of the OEMs' elements and how they should be structured. The second gap was that OEMs' literature lacks a methodology or structured process to facilitate the best practices adaptation at the initial stage of OEMs' implementation. The analysis also proved that most OEMs could not support organizations in sustaining an Excellent Organizational Performance (EOP) level after the initial stage of OEMs' implementation. Moreover, the literature analysis showed that current OEMs lack a method, tool, or techniques to support the organizations in the stages beyond the assessment stage. Also, there is a need for a unified list of Critical Success Factors (CSFs) to guide the organization's efforts toward achieving an EOP. The last gap was that the analyzed OEMs were unable to propose any Performance Management System (PMS). Therefore, this research aims to develop a comprehensive and practical framework for Organizational Excellence (OE) that provides a systematic and structured process to reach and sustain EOP. The proposed framework will fill the above-stated gaps.

The research methodology was designed based on the research onion model, the research aim and objectives, and the Ph.D. research nature. The archival research analysis is used to identify the major gaps in the OEMs' literature, identify the framework's features, propose the framework's elements, propose the framework structure, unify the CSFs lists, construct the organizational Virtual DNA (V-DNA), and creating the Process Improvement Methodology (PIM). The archival research analysis, the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP), and the Technique for Order of Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution (TOPSIS) are used to construct the Performance Management Dashboard (PMD) and the decision-making tool. The case study strategy is used to test the framework elements and validate them.

The proposed practical framework consists of eight elements that include start with leadership, best practices adaptation, selecting the CSFs, mapping the organization processes structure, creating a knowledge database and continuously developing staff capabilities, constructing the organizational V-DNA, developing the PMD with the decision-making tool, and using PIM. The practical framework process flow is composed of ten steps that show how the framework elements are used to reach and sustain EOP.

The practical framework was validated by applying it in a production workshop from a cold merchandizing equipment manufacturer located in the UAE. Using the organizational V-DNA concept showed that the V-DNA concept is applicable and can be an essential information source. Applying the PMD, the decision-making tool, and the Enhanced Business Process Management (EBPM) methodology to monitor, analyze, manage, and improve the workshop process was shown to be successful. The PMD proved a useful tool that can provide a holistic view of the workshop performance areas instead of focusing on one isolated business aspect such as workshop productivity or efficiency. A future research agenda is proposed to guide future research directions.

The proposed framework has many managerial and practical implications. The framework will assist the managers and practitioners in having a better understanding of how to start the excellence journey. The framework will explain which framework elements need to be used, which excellence principles/elements should they select, which CSFs are essential for OE scope, and how to manage and improve the performance in a systematic and structured way.

There are some limitations in this research. The first limitation was the limited access to the organizations' data because of data confidentiality. Another limitation was the time required to implement the framework elements and measure the outcomes. In the validation stage, some framework elements were implemented and validated using two years of historical data. The improvement opportunities were identified but collecting the results of applying the proposed solutions (improved processes or the best practices) was not possible because of the time limitation.

The novelty of the framework can be seen in many areas. The framework emphasizes the importance of knowledge management and continuous staff development in building organizational capabilities and adopting OE elements. The framework provides a better understanding of the excellence elements' classification and the role of each element. A unified list of the CSFs presented with precise classification of these factors to strategic, operational, and supportive factors. The framework emphasizes the importance of leadership capability creation. It highlights the leadership role in achieving and sustaining the EOP and provides a different view of the leadership role, which is different from the previous BEMs. The framework links the strategic level with the operational level through the V-DNA, PMD, and decision-making tool. It proposes a PMS with a PIM to select and improve the areas that represent improvement opportunities. This part was not available in most of the reviewed frameworks.

Keywords

Organizational Excellence; Organizational Excellence Methodologies; Framework; Virtual DNA; Excellent Organizational Performance; Best Practices; Critical Success Principles.