

Corvinus University of Budapest
Doctoral School of Sociology and Communication Science

THESIS BOOKLET

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Necessity of Excellency:
Rethinking Business Excellence: An Internal Organizational Communication and Motivation-
Centered Perspective

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1. Research background and justification for the selection of the topic

Current research addresses some of these shortcomings of current major business excellence models and gives an overview to create a new business excellence model which emphasizes the quality aspect in the process of communication in organizations. This dissertation presents a novel analysis of major business excellence models, emphasizing the crucial roles of organizational communication and employee motivation in achieving success. It introduces a new business excellence model that integrates these elements, particularly in the context of remote working, highlighting how effective communication and motivation are essential in today's evolving work environments. This dissertation makes a theoretical contribution by reinterpreting business excellence models through the lens of organizational communication and motivation, emphasizing these elements as core drivers of organizational excellence. This dissertation offers also a theoretical novelty by combining Socio-Technical Systems (STS) Theory with organizational communication and motivation, and integrating with business excellence models, emphasizing the role of organizational communication and employee motivation as critical mediators of business success. Unlike traditional business excellence models that primarily focus on process optimization and performance metrics, this research introduces a communication-driven excellence framework. This framework redefines business excellence by emphasizing the role of organizational communication and motivation as fundamental to achieving excellence. By doing so, it connects the human-centered and process-driven aspects of business excellence models, addressing a gap in existing frameworks. While STS Theory focuses on balancing social and technical systems within organizations, this research expands its application to remote work settings, showing how effective communication and motivation help maintain stability in digital workplaces. Based on these insights, the dissertation introduces a new business excellence model that positions communication and motivation at its core, moving beyond traditional efficiency-focused approaches to a more human-centered perspective that fosters business success. By integrating STS Theory, communication frameworks, and motivation theories, this research provides a holistic, interdisciplinary approach to understanding and improving business excellence in organizational settings.

The reason for the selected topic choice is to analyze organizational communication and employee motivation from a broad and new perspective. The subject of business excellence

models and their base, total quality management, is usually considered as a topic for life sciences or business management academic research areas. But the emphasis of these business excellence models, and the total quality management perspective is continuous improvement in every step within an organization, including the leadership behaviors and main communication style. For that reason, the author believes that communication is one of the most essential principles in the business excellence models and it should be examined within the communication research area. What is known in the literature is that effective organizational communication supports employees' motivation and business success (Ramadanty & Martinus, 2016). On the other hand, current business excellence models support the excellence in every functioning step of the organizations, including the internal stakeholders' satisfaction, motivation, and engagement (Ferdowsian, 2016). The gap and questionable area are that can a company improve the employees' motivation with a well-established organizational communication structure within the establishment of a business excellence model. On the other hand, can a new business excellence model which focuses on effective organizational communication help implement a well-structured process to increase the motivation of employees? The necessity to answer the defined gap area comes from the need to emphasize the quality aspect in the process of communication in organizations. The organizations cannot achieve the success without the effective communication and employee engagement (Tourish & Hargie, 2009), and business excellence models ensure the quality of every step of functioning, the author of the present research investigates that if a new business excellence model focuses on quality aspect of organizational communication and employee motivation while combining remote working environment can increase the internal and external success of the organizations or not. Therefore, a pilot scheme of the new business excellence model will be presented at the end of the dissertation. According to Rajhans (2012), because of the challenges in the world, human resources consider employee management to be one of the biggest challenges in an organization. Human resources demand skilful handling of thoughts, feelings, and emotions to secure highest productivity. Organizational communication plays an important role in this challenge. Therefore, well-structured organizational communication gains importance in the companies. Communication is at the core of most international business operations (Saner & Søndergaard, 2000). In the companies which have international employees, communication has much more essentiality and impact on the employees' situation. Increasingly, successful communication is recognized as a critical factor in the operations of multinational corporations, at the interpersonal, group, and organizational level (Szkudlarek et al. 2020). An organization itself is a system of behaviour and so communication is one of its

main attributes (Dupe, 2015). In this research, the author intends to combine excellence models and organizational communication. Organizational communication has considerable importance in communication studies (Mumby & Stohl, 1996) but the influence of a system to these particular areas was not studied sufficiently in previous research. The analysis would focus on the elements of business excellence models, their effects on organizational communication and at the end, how the systems influence the motivation and satisfaction of the employees. The new approach of this research for the communication research area, is combining three major business excellence models and analysing their elements by pointing out organizational communication. The above-mentioned three major business excellence models are the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award and The Deming Prize. At the end of this research, a new model will be created which will focus on the effects of organizational communication during remote working processes on employee motivation. Business excellence models provide a functioning system to the company. Without a system, an organization, however major or minor it shall be, cannot achieve success. Since the 1990s, companies have mostly adopted the business excellence models (Fan & Chang, 2021). Existing business excellence models provide guidance for organizations across industries to achieve performance excellence, identify problems, and promote solutions (Dima et al, 2019). Ineffective communication can lead to misunderstandings and lack of information in the organizational functioning. In the end, it would cause an employee or other partner to be unsatisfied and unmotivated (Desa et al., 2019). Business excellence is the ability of organizations to ensure that all relevant partners– as employees, customers, society, and stakeholders (Pozega et al., 2014) – are getting satisfied and motivated through business activities. Since one of the main objectives of business excellence models is to ensure the motivation and satisfaction of the relevant parties of the organization, the role of communication has a large role in this process. However, existing excellence models include the main parts focusing on management style, customer and employee satisfaction, policies and strategies, and results. They do not have the elements of how the communication structure should be implemented, what the main points are, how it can relate to corporate culture and how related parties', especially employees', motivation and satisfaction can be increased. Remote or hybrid working has begun to be widely used during and after the Covid-19 pandemic, even by organizations that are not sufficiently prepared for such arrangements technically and organizationally (Urbaniec et al., 2022). Remote working is one of the most flexible working forms (Wang et al., 2020), but it can be un motivating for the employees if an organization is not fully organized for this specific working type. If the communication flow cannot be

integrated between the organization and employees, the productivity would decrease during the remote working. Therefore, the creation of the new excellence model will also enclose remote working processes.

The aim of this research is to analyze the internal organizational communication and motivation aspects for organizational success within the framework of the major business excellence models. As an outcome of the main aim, the current dissertation offers a new business excellence model which focuses on the communication, motivation, and remote working aspects. To analyze the communication and motivation aspects in the organizations, STS Theory is chosen as a conceptual framework. STS Theory, developed by Trist and Bamforth (1951), posits that organizations are composed of interdependent social and technical subsystems. Effective organizational performance requires harmonizing these subsystems through structured communication and motivation (Hall, 1995). Since the major business excellence models focus on optimizing both human engagement and operational efficiency for organizational success, effective internal organizational communication and motivation ensure balance between social (people) and technical (process) elements (Welch & Jackson, 2007) and it leads the current research to the investigation of the major business excellence models' role in this system. STS Theory is a suitable conceptual framework for this dissertation because it directly addresses the critical interplay between social and technical elements within organizations, emphasizing the need for effective communication and motivation to achieve optimal performance. Given that major business excellence models aim to enhance both human engagement and operational efficiency, STS Theory provides a comprehensive lens to examine how structured communication and motivation practices contribute to balancing people and processes. Its focus on harmonizing subsystems aligns seamlessly with the dissertation's goal of reframing business excellence models through organizational communication and motivation. On the other hand, one of the main research areas of this study is the analysis of business excellence models and organizational communication strategies' establishment in the companies. The necessity of the new model is coming from the fact that already established business excellence models do not focus on the role of communication, even though it is one of the most essential factors while assuring the motivation and satisfaction of the relevant parties. Additionally, with the creation of a new excellence model, organizational communication and human resources departments will be integrated more in the quality process. This integration is necessary because every organization, especially with the increasing number of remote workers, must give the needed value and time to its employees to be able to

ensure satisfaction, motivation, and productivity. Current major business excellence models connect the organizational success and continuous quality to the satisfaction and motivation of internal and external partners. To be able to ensure motivation and satisfaction, communication is one of the most important tools. Nevertheless, business excellence models do not have communication process as an element of quality included into the models. Additionally, existing business excellence models do not have the criterion on evaluation of remote working process and employee motivation. For that reason, it was still a gap in the communication research: a model needs to emphasize the quality factor in the role of organizational communication into a functioning business excellence model. In the meantime, existing research establishes that STS Theory provides a systemic understanding of how organizations balance social and technical subsystems through organizational communication structure, while business excellence models focus on optimizing processes, performance, and continuous improvement (Landsbergis et al., 1999; Weick, 2012; Wuersch et al., 2023). Additionally, motivation and organizational communication theories explain how employee engagement and information flow impact productivity and organizational loyalty. However, what remains unclear is how organizations systematically use internal organizational communication and motivation, not just as supportive factors but as central drivers, to achieve business excellence, particularly in evolving work environments such as remote setting. The research gap lies in the lack of an integrated framework that operationalizes organizational communication and motivation within the STS structure, demonstrating their direct influence on business excellence rather than treating them as secondary influences.

The novelty of current dissertation is to analyze the major business excellence models and point out the importance of organizational communication and employee motivation within the framework of business excellence; furthermore, to include into a new model the context of remote working and employee motivation. The existing literature states the importance of communication in the organizations and the communication flow has a positive impact on the employee motivation. On the other hand, most established business excellence models in the world, support the implementation of a fully functioning system in the organizations to sustain the organizational success in every operational step. This system includes the satisfaction of the internal stakeholders. Nevertheless, the major business excellence models (EFQM, Malcolm Baldrige, Deming Prize) do not have the direct criterion of communication or organizational communication. According to the results of the current research, organizations which use business excellence models (specifically EFQM in the context of the current research) have an

understanding of an effective organizational structure's necessity in order to satisfy the employees, but there are no direct rules or directions in the existing models to help the organizations from the perspective of organizational communication. Therefore, the novelty of the current dissertation is an analysis of the business excellence models from the perspective of organizational communication and employee motivation to reach organizational success and offer a new business excellence model which focuses on the communication, motivation and remote working aspects. The need to have a communication aspect in a business excellence model comes from the fact that, the world and organizational structures change day by day. It is a challenge for the companies to sustain motivational factors in a quality aspect. Organizational communication is one of the key elements to ensure the motivation of the employees and organizational loyalty. Business excellence models connect the business success and continuous quality to the satisfaction and motivation of internal and external partners. To be able to ensure motivation and satisfaction, communication is one of the most important tools. Nevertheless, business excellence models do not have communication process as an element of quality included into the models. Additionally, existing business excellence models do not have the criterion on evaluation of remote working process and employee motivation. For that reason, it was still a gap in the communication research: a model needs to emphasize the quality factor in the role of organizational communication into a functioning business excellence model. Thus, the author of the current dissertation created a new model to cover the deficient parts of the existing business excellence models. This dissertation offers a theoretical contribution by reframing business excellence models through the view of organizational communication and motivation, positioning them as central mechanisms in achieving excellence. While traditional excellence models prioritize performance metrics, efficiency, and process optimization, they often lack a strong theoretical foundation for understanding how communication structures and motivation dynamics mediate organizational success. This study addresses this gap by conceptualizing business excellence as a function of communicative and motivational processes, arguing that organizations do not merely operate through structured processes but through socially embedded interactions that sustain performance, innovation, and adaptability. In doing so, it expands the theoretical scope of business excellence models by integrating insights from organizational communication theories, process theories of motivation and STS theory. While STS traditionally emphasizes the interaction between social and technical subsystems, its theoretical potential in explaining how communication and motivation regulate organizational structures, particularly in remote work contexts, remains underexplored. By synthesizing these theoretical domains, this dissertation provides a new conceptual

foundation for understanding business excellence, shifting the focus from static process-driven frameworks to a dynamic, communicative, and motivation-centered perspective that accounts for contemporary organizational complexities.

2. The methods used

The methodological part of the research consisted preliminary interviews, preliminary questionnaires and a pilot scheme for the new business excellence model. The preliminary interviews and questionnaires were conducted to explore the practical information about the existing business excellence models. The business excellence model which is selected for this evaluation is EFQM. The reason to choose the EFQM business excellence model comes from the fact that the new business excellence model would be based in Europe and EFQM is the only major business excellence model currently developed and used in Europe. The second reason to keep it limited to only EFQM was that the chance to reach out the companies and employees would be more accessible from the point of the author. The preliminary interviews were conducted with the companies which currently implemented and in use of EFQM business excellence model. The interviews were conducted with the different department managers of the companies to explore the managerial viewpoint in terms of business excellence model and its impact on communication and employee motivation. The preliminary questionnaire on the other hand was conducted with the employees who work in the EFQM implemented companies. The reason to conduct the questionnaire was to evaluate the perception of the employees about the EFQM business excellence model. Both interviews and questionnaires consist of the question of the need of a new business excellence model which focuses on the organizational communication and employee motivation aspect in the quality process. Within the perspective of the results and interpretations of the preliminary interview and questionnaire, a new business excellence model (Organizational Communication Business Excellence Model) is developed by the author of the dissertation. Highlighting the practical part of the new model, a pilot scheme was conducted at a pre-selected institution (Altınbaş University) at the department of Dean of Students Department. According to the results of the current research, effective communication flow has an impact on the motivation and satisfaction of the employees. The existing business excellence models do not give the necessary directions and adjustments to the organizations to ensure the structured communication flow, and they do not direct it to employee motivation. From the perspective of the existing literature and results of the methodology, to support the organizational success, organizations should put effort on the systematically communication flow and employee motivation. Therefore, according to the results of the pilot scheme which is

conducted as a methodology of the current research, the new business excellence model is beneficial for organizations to sustain the quality aspect in the communication process and support employee motivation.

New Business Excellence Model - Pilot Scheme

The new business excellence model is completed with the pilot scheme as a main methodology of the current dissertation. The new business excellence model contains the quality aspect in the whole communication process and focus on the employee motivation. Meanwhile, it will give the criteria for a remote working environment which is not adapted in the major business excellence models. The pilot scheme will have an important factor in the communication structure: how it can relate to corporate culture and how related parties', especially employees', motivation and satisfaction can be increased. The necessity of the new model is coming from the fact that already established business excellence models do not focus on the role of communication, even though it is one of the most essential factors while assuring the motivation and satisfaction of the relevant parties. Additionally, with the creation of a new excellence model, organizational communication and human resources departments will be integrated more in the quality process. This integration is necessary because every organization, especially with the increasing number of remote workers, must give the needed value and time to its employees to be able to ensure satisfaction, motivation, and productivity. The new business excellence model will be the novelty from the mentioned aspects. The new model will be focusing on the communication aspect and increasing employee motivation and loyalty, so small and mid-sized companies will be able to implement and use it. The existing models do not have the aspect of communication and do not reflect the quality factor in organizational communication and employee motivation. The author of the present dissertation suggests that business excellence models should have a communication factor because the reason for all the models' implementation is to increase productivity and benefits, and without an efficient communication flow, organizations cannot achieve the productivity and motivation; therefore, they cannot achieve the success and excellence. The pilot scheme of the new business excellence model will be implemented in Altınbaş University, Dean of Students Department. The specific department will be voluntarily contributing to the current study, and the pilot scheme will take place in the mentioned department during June 2023-September 2023.

3. Scientific results of the dissertation

This research presents several novel contributions to the fields of organizational communication, employee motivation, and business excellence models by integrating communication and motivation as core quality factors within business excellence frameworks. The study challenges the traditional process-driven approach of existing BEMs and argues that effective organizational communication and employee motivation should be recognized as essential enablers of excellence, particularly in evolving work environments such as remote work setting. There are several key scientific contributions of this research. One of the primary theoretical advancements of this research is the redefinition of business excellence models to explicitly integrate organizational communication and motivation as fundamental components of quality management and continuous improvement. While existing models such as EFQM, Malcolm Baldrige, and Deming focus on leadership, strategy, and operational efficiency, they lack a structured framework that incorporates communication processes and employee motivation as measurable quality factors. This study identifies this gap and proposes that internal organizational communication should be formally recognized as a structured process within business excellence models, ensuring that companies develop systematic approaches to managing information flow, leadership communication, and employee engagement. Another significant theoretical contribution of this research is the integration of STS theory into the business excellence model framework, linking organizational communication and motivation to the balance between social and technical subsystems. While STS theory explains how organizations function as interdependent social and technical entities, this study expands its application by demonstrating that organizational communication serves as a mediator between social (human-centered) and technical (process-driven) components of business excellence. The research provides empirical evidence that effective communication structures enhance motivation, align technical and social subsystems, and lead to improved organizational performance. Another novel finding of this research is the identification of critical gaps in existing business excellence models concerning remote work processes. While traditional models focus on leadership, process management, and quality improvement, they do not provide structured guidelines for managing employee motivation and communication in remote work settings. The research highlights that digital communication, leadership adaptation, and remote work motivation strategies should be explicitly incorporated into business excellence frameworks to ensure sustainable organizational success in modern workplaces. This

dissertation contributes to the scientific and practical understanding of business excellence, organizational communication, and motivation by bridging the gaps between business excellence models, STS theory, and motivation theories. By demonstrating that communication and motivation are not just supportive factors but central drivers of business success, this research establishes a new theoretical foundation for integrating these elements into excellence models. The Organizational Communication Excellence Model (OCEM) serves as a practical application of this framework, offering a structured, people-centered approach to achieving excellence in contemporary workplaces, particularly in remote work environments. This study opens new ways for research on business excellence, communication strategies, and motivation dynamics, encouraging future scholars to further explore how human and technical factors can be systematically aligned to drive organizational success and continuous improvement in an increasingly complex business landscape.

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