EFQM Excellence Model and Investigating the Effectiveness and Communication Skills among the Training Managers and Staff at Shiraz University

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Abstract: In the 21st century, organizations attempt to suffer the least amount of loss and take the most benefit in chaos and change conditions. This is a quiet and uninterrupted battle wherein the victory is for the best and most powerful. Model of Business Excellence is the answer to the question of what is the superior organization and what goals and concepts should it pursue. Among these, EFQM model has win more welcome and popularity than the others, all over the world. Therefore, in this study, using a model of EFQM excellence, the effectiveness and communication skills among the training managers and staff at Shiraz University were investigated. The statistical population of this study consisted of all the staff and managers at Shiraz University which are 1701 in number, according to the statistics provided by Shiraz University. Using stratified sampling proportional to population size and using Cochran formula, the sample size was determined as 189. The research is descriptive-analytical and the data were collected through a questionnaire. To analyze the data and to examine the hypotheses, Chi-square test was used. The results showed that interactive meetings between management and the staff was not effective in improving working relationships and the lowest scores for available communication channels were related to intranet, suggestion box and university publication, respectively. Thus, the ground is made for improving communication channels by valuing the above factors and improvements in conducting the interactive meetings and also considering the staff's opinions.

Key words: EFQM excellence model, effectiveness and communication skills, Shiraz University, Cochran formula, descriptive-analytical

INTRODUCTION

Performance assessment can be defined as assessing how well organizations manage and transfer costs to customers and other stakeholders. Performance assessment should be cost effective and transfer a value. When assessing, creating balance between perceptual criteria which come directly from service users and other stakeholders and performance indicators which organization records is of significance (Moullin, 2004). Also, performance assessment may be defined as formal evaluations and rating of individuals carried out by the managers in annual review meeting. Performance assessment should be distinguished from performance management which has a more general and natural and broader management process. To clarify the mutual expectations, the process of performance management emphasizes the supportive role of the managers who act like consultants, not judge and specifically pay attention to the future (Arora, 1998). As stated by Armstrong and Murlis, "performance assessment has turned into an wrong yearly tradition". Evaluation is a

bureaucratic or management control system. Evaluation is a form of control which is considered as a performance care. The literature on evaluating different organizational levels indicate that there are four categories for assessing an organization's performance. Performance evaluation of the staff: this kind of evaluation is evaluation of the smallest unit of an organization. Existing literature and management area are very abundant in this case. Many models have been proposed to assess the staff's performance and each model, based on the proposed indicators for evaluation, presented a method to assess the staff's performance. Many approaches may be mentioned within this area. Evaluating the performance of one part of an organization: this kind of evaluation as a subset of organizational assessment is essential for evaluating the performance of an organization. The present study seeks to find answer to the questions of Does the staff regard existing two-way communication channels as sufficient? Does the staff believe that universities value their views? Are interactive meetings between the management and staff effective in improving working relationships? Do managers benefit from the

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staff's opinions in the decision making process? Has the university proposed appropriate approaches for communication between the management and staff. To this aim, two-way communication channels between the staff and managers, effectiveness of the interactive meetings between the management and staff in improving working relationships the managers' decision-making process form the staff's viewpoint and communication between the management and staff at Shiraz University were investigated (Neergaard, 2002).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research method is survey. In this study, firstly the initial question was written and it was determined that what questions can be answered by this study and what results are obtained. Secondly, exploratory and preliminary studies, study and interviews with experts were conducted. Then, theoretical and analytical model was developed, the instruments for data collection, reliability and validity and data assessment tools to collect data through questionnaire were determined. And finally, the results were discussed and concluded. The statistical population of this study consisted of all the staff and managers at Shiraz University which are 1701 in number, according to the statistics provided by Shiraz University. Using Cochran formula, the sample size was determined as 189 (Bhatt, 2000).

Organizational excellence questionnaire was proposed by European foundation for quality and method management for self-assessment. This questionnaire examines 9 criteria of the EFQM excellence model in the organization (Soltani *et al.*, 2003).

In this study, to examine the internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha was used. Cronbach's alpha coefficient is used to assess uni-dimentionality of attitudes, beliefs, and etc. (Bou-Llusar *et al.*, 2005).

As is seen in Table 1, Cronbach's alpha value for communication skills questionnaire is 0.87 which is acceptable for the purpose of this study.

The researcher personally went to various departments of Shiraz University, distributed 189 questionnaires among the University's staff and collected them after completing by the staff. To analyze the data, first the general questions of the questionnaire were analyzed and then, the frequency of each question was examined. Finally, the research hypotheses were analyzed. To test the hypotheses, first the variables were determined and then, they were analyzed for the purpose of research. To examine the hypotheses, χ^2-test was used. And the data were analyzed using SPSS Software, Version 22, at 0.05 significance level (Tari, 2006).

Table 1: Internal consistency

No. of questions	Validity	Cronbach's alpha	Questionnaire
50	0/70	0/85	Organizational excellence
23	0/75	0/87	Communication skills

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To answer the first hypothesis that the staff regards existing two-way communication channels as sufficient:. According to the calculated Chi-square (χ^2), $\chi^2 = 244.118$, with df 3 and comparing it with Chi-square of Table 2 (χ^2_c), $\chi^2_c = 7.815$ with df 3, it can be deduced that H_0 (the staff does not regard existing two-way communication channels as sufficient) is rejected and H_1 (the staff regards existing two-way communication channels as sufficient) is accepted at 95% confidence level. In other words, H_1 is statistically significant at 95% confidence level:

$$7/815 > 244/118$$
$$\chi^2_c > \chi^2$$

To answer the second hypothesis that the staff believes that the University values their opinions. According to the calculated Chi-square ($\chi^2/_c$), $\chi^2 = 85.023$ with df 3 and comparing it with Chi-square of Table 3 (χ^2_c), $\chi^2_c = 7.815$ with df 3, it can be deduced that H_0 (the staff believes that the University does not value their opinions) is rejected and H_1 (the staff believes that the university values their opinions) is accepted at 95% confidence level. In other words, H_1 is statistically significant at 95% confidence level (Castka *et al.*, 2003):

$$7/815 > 85$$
$$\chi^2_c > \chi^2$$

Regarding the third hypothesis that the interactive meetings are effective in improving the working relationships between the management and staff.

According to the calculated Chi-square (χ^2), $\chi^2 = 7.598$ with df 3 and comparing it with Chi-square of Table 4 (χ^2_c), $\chi^2_c = 7.815$ with df 3, it can be deduced that H_1 (the interactive meetings are effective in improving the working relationships between the management and staff) is rejected and H_0 (the interactive meetings are not effective in improving the working relationships between the management and staff) is accepted at 95% confidence level. In other words, H_1 is not statistically significant at 95% confidence level:

$$7/815 < 7/598$$
$$\chi^2_c < \chi^2$$

Table 2: Chi-square goodness of fit test for two-way communication channels

Test statistic	Statistic value	df
Statistic χ^2	118/244	3

Table 3: Chi-square for the staff's beliefs

Test statistic	Statistic value	df
Statistic χ^2	023/85	3

Table 4: χ^2-test for the interactive meetings between the management and staff

Test statistic	Statistic value	df
χ^2 statistic	598/7	3

Table 5: χ^2-test for decision-making process from the staff's viewpoint

Df	Statistic value	Test statistic
3	409/109	Statistic χ^2

Table 6: χ^2-test test for communication between the management and staff

Df	Statistic value	Test statistic
3	521/308	Statistic

To answer the forth hypothesis that the managers benefit from the staff's opinions in the decision making process. According to the calculated Chi-square (χ^2), $\chi^2 = 109.409$ with df 3 and comparing it with Chi-square of Table 5 (χ^2_c), $\chi^2_c = 7.815$ with df 3, it can be deduced that H_0 (the managers do not benefit from the staff's opinions in the decision making process) is rejected and H_1 (the managers benefit from the staff's opinions in the decision making process) is accepted at 95% confidence level. In other words, H_1 is statistically significant at 95% confidence level:

$$7/815 > 109/409$$

$$\chi^2_c > \chi^2$$

Also, to answer the fifth hypothesis that the University has proposed appropriate solutions for communication between the management and staff.

According to the calculated Chi-square (χ^2), $\chi^2 = 308.521$ with df 3 and comparing it with Chi-square of Table 6 (χ^2_c), $\chi^2_c = 7.815$ with df 3, it can be deduced that H_0 (the university has not proposed appropriate solutions for communication between the management and staff) is rejected and H_1 (the university has proposed appropriate solutions for communication between the management and staff) is accepted at 95% confidence level. In other words, H_1 is statistically significant at 95% confidence level:

$$521/308 > 815/7$$

$$\chi^2_c > \chi^2$$

CONCLUSION

According to the presented questions and the respondents' answers, the lowest scores for available communication channels were related to intranet, suggestion box and university publication respectively. Thus, it is necessary to make ground for making best use of these communication channels by giving importance to the above factors (Wongrassamee *et al.*, 2003; Rowbotham *et al.*, 2000).

According to the results the interactive meetings are not effective in improving the working relationships between the management and staff and the significance of oral communication meetings between the managers and staff, this sense can be more effectively enhanced in the staff, by increasing the participation and the sense of participation seeking in them that their opinions are effective in planning and decisions at Shiraz University. Certainly, this leads to job satisfaction and motivation.

Also, conducting monthly meetings with the managers and staff at office of the Deans of the faculties, addressing the problems with the staff, using their opinions and ideas and scoring the most influential comments are considered as effective in encouraging the staff.

Recognizing the personnel's problems, including working and family problems, the managers can take an essential step to improve the staff-managers relations and make the ground for their and Shiraz University's development and growth through the personnel's empathy.

Providing the personnel with the needed information on the scope of activities of the unit may create an atmosphere of trust between the management and staff and make appropriate conditions for the managers for the transfer and exchange of views in various fields of work.

Creating athletic, recreational and scientific activities among the personnel and the formation of teams and groups for such activities might boost the spirit of participation in the staff and improve working and out of work relationships.

Given the importance of suggestion box and its inefficiency so far in order to portray it as effective and achieve the desired efficiency, the followings measures can be taken.

The staff should be ensured, through brief and low-cost advertisings That suggestion box has taken a new way and their sense of confidence, trust and cooperation should be enhanced. Also, after collecting the comments and suggestions, one person who is responsible for collecting this information should divide and separate the collected materials based on priority and importance, refer them to the respective managers and after determining a specified and relatively short time, inform the personnel about the managers'

opinion about that specific matter in different ways including using bulletin boards, sending it to the units and other ways.

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