

A study of the relationship between the EFQM organizational excellence model and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education

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ABSTRACT

The present study scrutinized the performance of Joghatay educational system based on the EFQM organizational model. Five dimensions of the model including Leadership, Policy and Strategy, People, Partnerships and Resources, and Processes of Joghatay Office of Education were investigated in the present research. Through the field work, survey, a questionnaire whose Cronbach's Alpha was 95% was administered to collect the required data. The population in the present study consisted of all the teachers, principals, assistant principals, and staff of Joghatay Office of Education of whom 104 subjects were randomly selected. The study was based on the descriptive method of analysis and the data was analyzed through SPSS. The overall findings of the study indicated that there was a significant relationship between the EFQM organizational excellence model and the performance of the educational system of Joghatay where 47% of the performance changes were influenced by the EFQM model criteria.

KEY TERMS: EFQM, performance, Joghatay Office of Education, enablers, results

1. INTRODUCTION

Today the role of effective assessment system in the improvement and excellence of organizations has already proven vitally constructive. Assessing the performance of organizations to identify the weaknesses and strengths to better and optimally use the possibilities and resources enjoys a special position and has seriously been attended recently. Thus, the organizational excellence models have been recognized as strong instruments to meet this need of organizations and have, to a large extent, been used to identify their problems and to determine the path to achieve the excellence of human resources. In fact, these models have served as an answer to the questions of survey: what is a better organization, what objectives is it following, and what criteria rule over its behaviors? By using the models, not only can an organization boost and ensure its success in operationally executing its plans set for the targets and assess them in different periods, but it also can compare its performance with that of the other organizations, especially the best ones. Of the assessment models of performance, the EFQM organizational excellence model is recognized as the most comprehensive one that has served as an exemplary pattern framework for the planning and determination of prizes in many countries.

The EFQM model presents a type of an organization which is theoretically and practically the best of all other organizations and shows how one should act in a competitive atmosphere to survive, develop, and excel (Najmi and Hussaini, 2003).

2. Statement of the problem

In today's complicated and ever-changing world where the development and advancement of countries, organizations, and small and big enterprises heavily depend on human beings' knowledge, the necessity of attending the quality of education and productivity is of vital importance. Achieving the goal, on the one hand, depends on the employment of an effective management and the adoption of a positive attitude towards the concept of education, and, on the other, requires having due criteria and directories to assess the educational performance (Hayati, 2006). Presently, the philosophy, disposition, and approach of a comprehensive quality management in education are an inevitable requirement all over the world (Torani, 2003).

Assessment in an organization to evaluate the status quo and weaknesses while controlling and investigating the policies and strategies applied can pave the way for planning and making policies to escalate the strengths of an organization, its services, and customer satisfaction (Ansari Jaber, 2009). Assessment in an organization can also provide the grounds for an organization while moving towards excellence, identify its status quo, evaluate its performance and, based on its findings, take measures to improve its conditions making its staff actively involved in the process of continuous and sustainable improvement (Terry, 2005).

On the other hand, early observations and studies show that many current activities in the educational system of Joghatay have not been investigated, which has in turn led to the lack of evaluation and assessment. Thus, to investigate and evaluate the actual performance of Joghatay education, Leadership, Policy and Strategy, Human Resources, People, Partnerships and Resources were scrutinized and judged. With all this explanation, attempts were made to answer the fundamental question of if there was any relationship between the EFQM organizational excellence model and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education in the educational year of 2013-14.

3. The significance and necessity of the study

Organizational excellence is a set of noticeable managerial measures to achieve the results the organization has intended to achieve based on the eight fundamental concepts: Result orientation, Customer orientation, Leadership, Purpose consistency, Process- and fact-based management, Individual development and partnership, Continual learning, Innovation and improvement, Partnership enlargement, and Public responsibility inducement. Today, this definition is manifested in most of the texts and quality excellence or improvement in different fields such as industry, production, health, and education in today's world has been acknowledged as a necessity. Due to budget deficits and decline, dwindled knowledge and low skill level of graduates, people and/or states' insistence on the reconstruction or betterment of educational systems, quality excellence in education has gained its due and required meaning. On the universal level, the steps and measures such as self-sourcing the schools, valuing the managers' innovations and lengthening the school hours and educational years taken to promote the quality are among the outstanding indications of attending the quality. In such conditions, managerial authorities in education have [slightly] strived to modify the managerial concepts to use them as instruments for the reconstruction of educational reconstruction (Alagheband, 2003).

Unfortunately, the traditional management system in such countries as Iran has already been institutionalized where modern management is strongly challenged and/or resisted against. Although very positive and appropriate measures have already been taken to execute the modern management in Iran, they are still far away from the ideals (Azizi, 1990).

Education is one of the extremely important institutions in a society. Dynamic, effective, and healthy education plays a great role in educating specialized and prospective obliging human resources in the shifting societies (Bazergan, 2004). The excellence model is a methodical framework for assessing the performance of organizations in both the processes and the results dimensions. The achievements gained from such assessment in this approach are the empowering arms of organizations, and the likely improvable grounds and areas in the organizations where a list of strategies and prioritized plans and programs to achieve the goals is suggested are the objectives to follow. Based on the comprehensive quality lessons, attending the values of fundamental concepts is the requirement for the success and establishment of sustainable improvement in organizations (Ghavidel, 2007).

In the present study, the relationship between the organizational excellence model and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education was explored. By using the model, the researchers investigated the performance of Joghatay Office of Education based on the five dimensions, identified the strengths and weaknesses, and finally suggested the strategies to improve the performance. Accordingly, in regard with the need the educational system has to improve the educational quality and in regard to the shortage of applied resources in the field, it was hoped that

- the findings of the present study would be of benefits to different managers, policy makers, and planners of the educational system.

4. Research hypotheses

The main hypothesis:

- 4.1 There is a significant relationship between the EFQM organizational excellence model and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education.

The sub-hypotheses:

- 4.1.1 "There is a relationship between the Leadership and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education."
- 4.1.2 "There is a relationship between the Policy & Strategy and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education."
- 4.1.3 "There is a relationship between the People (Organizational Staff) and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education."
- 4.1.4 "There is a relationship between the Partnerships & Resources and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education."
- 4.1.5 "There is a relationship between the Processes and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education."

5. Review of the related literature and the research background

The European Foundation of Quality Management (EFQM)

The organizational excellence model of EFQM was based in nine areas. Five of the areas concern the empowering or enabling dimensions indicating the componential elements of an organization and the how of interacting with each other, and the remaining four concern the results or the performance of an organization and the results of employing the empowering or enabling strategies (enablers) (Najmi and Hussaini, 2004).

5.1 Leadership

In leadership, leaders are concerned with how the ideals and missions of an organization shall be identified, established, and achieved. Also, the strategies and grounds for an organization to succeed in long term are instituted, which [strategies] are practiced through appropriate activities and behaviors to achieve the goals (Bozorgi, 2004).

5.2 People (Staff)

This dimension shows how an organization employs its staff's skills, knowledge, and potentials in all levels of the organizational development and management and how policy & strategy and effectiveness of the processes can be planned (Jelodari Mamaghani, 2006).

5.3 Policy and strategy

This dimension deals with how an organization puts its missions into operation and achieves its ideals properly through the clear-cut strategies concentrated around the interests of the beneficiaries that are supported by policies, plans and programs, long-range goals, short-range goals, and processes (Najmi and Hussaini, 2008).

5.4 Partnerships and resources

In this area, an organization deals with how it can identify and manage the foreign and domestic resources and possibilities to support the policies, strategies established and increase the performance of the operational processes.

5.5 Processes

This dimension answers the question of how an organization manages and improves its processes to support its policies and strategies while securing and increasing its customers' satisfaction and other beneficiaries.

To touch upon the studies domestically and internationally carried out, the researchers included the following researches that can be of help to the subject matter development.

In his study, Rahmati (2008) investigated the performance of Reja Passenger Train Corporations by applying the organizational excellence model. He assessed fifteen out of sixty corporations by administering questionnaires and collected the required data from his survey, library, and documents and concluded that the final point attained by the corporations was 194.32 out of 1000 which indicated a drastically poor performance in the different sections of the enterprise.

Having scrutinized the performance of Darab Cement Factory based on the organizational excellence model, Afshar Jahanshahi (2006) came to the conclusion that the company outperformed the other corporations deliberated in the study hitting a point of 447 out of 1000 showing a difference of 120%. This company could get organizational excellence letters of appreciation.

By employing four criteria of the EFQM organizational excellence model, Izadi and Maleki (2006) studied the performance of two hospitals, the Alborz-e-karaj Hospital and the Varamin Shodaye-e-panzadeh-khordad Hospital and concluded that the highest point concerned the 'key performance results' reaching 56.5 for the former hospital and 212.2 for the latter one.

In studying the three models, the Organizational Excellence model, the Diming Model, the Malcolm Baldrige model, Razani concluded that the Organizational Model enjoyed a better popularity than did the other two.

Kalomora and Deldan (2006) studied the organizational excellence model in one hundred and eleven state universities of Spain and concluded that all the empowering/enabling elements of this model to help the organizations excel and identify their strengths were crucially beneficial.

By employing the organizational excellence model, Terry (2005) investigated the self-evaluation in five universities of Spain and concluded that if self-evaluation is carefully conducted (for example, management commitment to self-evaluation, forming teams and training them,) the process can serve as a strong instrument for the sustainable improvement of universities, data collection, and university criterion application and interpretation.

Bovaliosar et al. (2005) conducted a study on the interactional and communicative dimensions of the enablers and the results on the organizational excellence model of EFQM. The findings indicated that the higher the empowering indexes of the model the better the result indexes in different areas.

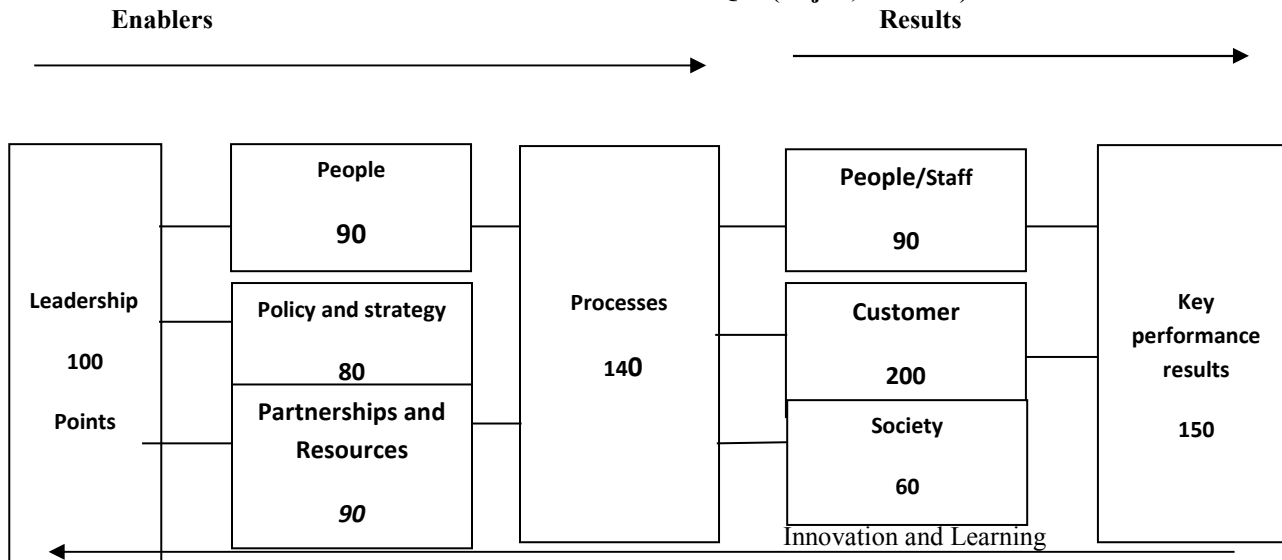
In their study entitled "Quality improvement in psychiatric care-ward in Madrid Public Hospital" based on organizational excellence, Vallejo and Sango (2003, 2005) concluded that the organizational excellence model could serve as a very useful framework for identifying the improvable areas. They came to the realization that only one criterion of 32 criteria was not applicable and at last this hospital could gain a point of 209 in 2003 and 311 out of 100 in 2005.

6. The Conceptual Model

To plan and conduct the present investigation, the researchers could employ different conceptual models. The current models of assessing the performances cannot normally help scrutinize the organizations thoroughly. For example, K., Peter (2005) emphasized the 'processes' (Koenig, 2005), and the traditional methods focused on the financial affairs of the organizations (Kanji, 2009). However, the researchers of the present study, by using the EFQM excellence model which is a comprehensive model of performance assessment, assessed the performance of Joghatay Office of Education and identified its strengths and weaknesses by focusing on the dimensions of Leadership, Policy and strategy, People (Staff), Partnerships and Resources, and Processes. The EFQM organizational excellence model presents a thorough map of an organization

which it [organization] can enjoy and employ to assess its different managerial and operational dimensions comprehensively and in turn help itself excel in various areas.

Table 1: EFQM (Najmi, 2010: 49)



7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Since it investigated the relationship between the organizational excellence model and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education, on the 'purpose' grounds, the present study could be classified as 'applied' and methodologically as 'descriptive survey'. It was 'applied' since the findings could be used to help improve and optimize the instruments, methods, and patterns to meet the staffs' needs and enhance the performance of educational systems. Methodologically, it was 'descriptive' since it surveyed the status quo of education and described what education was like without modifying its status. It was a 'survey' type because the data was collected through questionnaires from a randomly selected population. Non-experimentally, the present study was classified as descriptive inasmuch as it was conducted to touch upon the correlation where the researchers were to investigate the relationship between the organizational excellence model and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education. The population of the study was comprised of all the principals, assistant principals, teachers, and administrative staff in the educational year of 2013-2014. Of the entire population, based on Kerjcie- Morgan's table and stratified-random selection, 104 tenure and on-contract subjects were selected to participate in the study. The instruments and methods of collecting the required data were of library and field work type. The validity of the questionnaires was approved by the experts in the field and the reliability for the Excellence questionnaire was 92% obtained through Cronbach's Alpha and for the Performance one 87%. To analyze the data, the researchers used the SPSS and descriptive-inferential statistics.

8. Data analysis

The following bar graph shows the demographic information and features of the participants working in Joghatay Office of Education.

Fig. 1: The demographic analysis of the population

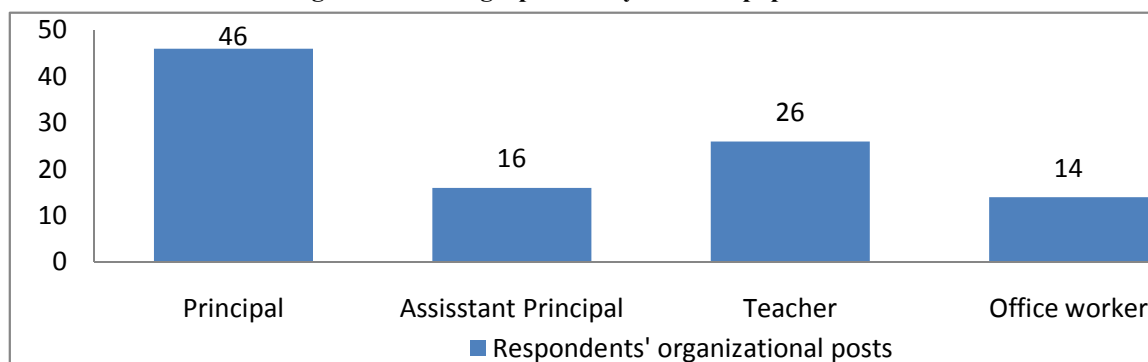


Table 2: The results of the performance of Joghatay Office of Education in organizational excellence dimensions

	Criterion means	Criterion value (points)	Main questions	Questionnaire items	Points	Final points obtained	Excellence Condition
Leadership	14	100	12	6	50	28=50/100*14	Poor
Policy and Strategy	14	80	17	6	28	50=28/100*14	Poor
People (Staff)	18	90	26	8	28	64=28/100*18	Poor
Partnerships	13	90	25	6	22	60=22/100*13	Poor
Processes	14	140	18	6	47	30=47/100*14	Poor
Enablers	73	500	98	32	163	45=163/100*73	Poor

Having analyzed the data, the researchers concluded that there was a significant relationship between the organizational excellence model and the performance of the educational system. The highest performance variation was for 'Leadership' dimension with a level of 52% and the lowest for 'People' (Staff) with a variation of 22%. 47% of the performance variation was influenced by the organizational excellence and the excellence level of Joghatay Office of Education was 'poor' in 'enablers'. With the statement of the results obtained from testing the hypotheses, suggestions for each of the hypotheses are given to improve the conditions.

9. Hypothesis test results

The main hypothesis test results

9.1 The main hypothesis of the study said, "There is a significant relationship between the organizational excellence model of EFQM and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education."

Table 3: The correlation between variables

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Correlation quotient	Level of significance	No.
Organizational excellence	Performance	0.47	0.000	104

As observed, the correlation between the organizational excellence and the performance was 47%, and since the level of significance was lower than 0.05 it could be concluded that there was a significant relationship between the organizational excellence model and the performance.

With the approval of the main hypothesis, it could be concluded that the organizational excellence model had a great effect on the performance. In line with the findings of the present study, the results of Ghorbani, Pardakhtchi, and Imam Jomeh's study assessing the performance of Shahid Rejaee Teacher Training University based on the organizational excellence of EFQM approved of the findings of the present study. Therefore, according to the findings obtained from this investigation indicating the effect of the organizational excellence model of EFQM on the performance of organizations, it feels necessary that modifications be made based on the universal standards to improve the quality of education. Moreover, the findings of the present study are all in line with the findings obtained from the studies conducted by Khajeh-e-azad and Zaree (2008), Ahmadi and Ansari Mehr (2008), Sanjari (2003), Mehralizadeh (2008), Dashtizadeh (2004), Izadi and Maleki (2005), Kalomora and Deldan (2006), Terry (2005), and Hynd (2004). It indicates that the organizational excellence model is effective in identifying the most prominent resources and enablers of an organization. It also analytically shows which section of an organizational structure plays a pivotal role in helping reach a suitably sustainable condition, and since educational systems play a great role in educating people, its assessment can effectively enhance the quality of education.

Sub-hypothesis 1 test results

9.1.1 "There is a relationship between the Leadership and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education."

Table 4: The correlation between variables

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Correlation quotient	Level of significance	No.
Leadership	Performance	0.52	0.000	104

As obviously noticed, the correlation between the Leadership index and the performance was 52%, and since the level of significance was lower than 0.05 it could be concluded that there was a significant relationship between the Leadership and the performance.

Thus, with the findings of the study and the effect of leadership on the performance, it feels necessary that managers (here principals) be selected and new patterns be planned according to the universal standards to qualify the system of education. Moreover, managers and leaders should personally get assured of the existence of such evaluation and assessment systems and get involved in reinforcing the moral and value patterns understanding the staffs' needs and requirements and attempting to satisfy them. The results of the present investigation show that there is a significant difference between the leadership criterion and the performance of education in Joghatay Office of Education that are in line

with the findings of the studies conducted by Chekvanieh (2004), Aminizadeh (2005), Kaloo (2006), Seban C. University (2004), Brown Vandile (2003), and English Steve university of Sports (2006). Furthermore, in his study, Kaloo concluded that there was a significant relationship between the empowering elements (enablers) and the performances of universities, and there are numerous investigations on the effect of leadership on the performance of organizations. This is confirmed by Carol Steid (2001), Winston (1993), Behroozi, Farokhnejad, and Rahjoo (2009).

Sub-hypothesis 2 test results

9.1.2 “There is a relationship between the Policy and Strategy and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education.”

Table 5: The correlation between variables

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Correlation quotient	Level of significance	No.
Policy and Strategy	Performance	0.36	0.000	104

As observed, the correlation between Policy and Strategy and the performance was 36%, and since the level of significance was lower than 0.05 it could be concluded that there was a significant relationship between the Policy and Strategy dimension and the performance. It is required that people (staff) be encouraged to work in teams and groups and adapt with the policies and strategies adopted by the organizations (schools). The results indicate that there was a significant relationship between the Policy and Strategy dimension and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education that are in line with the findings of the studies carried out by Brown and Vandile (2003).

Sub-hypothesis 3 test results

9.1.3 “There is a relationship between the People (Staff) and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education.”

Table 6: The correlation between variables

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Correlation quotient	Level of significance	No.
People (Staff)	Performance	0.22	0.000	104

As found out, the correlation between People (Staff) and the performance was 22%, and since the level of significance was lower than 0.05 it could be concluded that there was a significant relationship between the People dimension and the performance. The relationship is in line with the findings of the studies carried out by Terry (2005), Hynd (2004), Aminizadeh (2005), and Mehralizadeh (2008). Thus, it is suggested that individual, team, and organizational learning opportunities be planned, provided, and encouraged. The staff's knowledge and skills should also be identified, classified, and coordinated with the requirements of schools and offices. Moreover, the feedback and opinions of the staff should be used to improve the human resources. The results indicate that there was a significant relationship between the People dimension and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education. This criterion plays a great role in the development and excellence of an organization and the factors that lead to the development of the staff should be attended seriously.

Sub-hypothesis 4 test results

9.1.4 “There is a relationship between the Partnerships and Resources and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education.”

Table 7: The correlation between variables

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Correlation quotient	Level of significance	No.
Partnerships and Resources	Performance	0.42	0.000	104

The correlation between Partnerships and Resources and the performance was 42%, and since the level of significance was lower than 0.05 it could be concluded that there was a significant relationship between the Partnerships and Resources dimension and the performance. The results indicate that there was a significant relationship between the Partnerships and Resources dimension and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education that are in line with the findings of the studies carried out by Steve School of Sports in England (2002) and University of Spain (2005). Thus, it is required that opportunities for key and strategic partnerships be identified and the structure-oriented partnership relationships be developed where synergy, innovations, critical and creative thinking can be supported and/or encouraged.

Sub-hypothesis 5 test results

9.1.5 "There is a relationship between the Processes and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education."

Table 8: The correlation between variables

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Correlation quotient	Level of significance	No.
Processes	Performance	0.38	0.000	104

As observed, the correlation between the Processes dimension and the performance was 38%, and since the level of significance was lower than 0.05 it could be concluded that there was a significant relationship between the Processes dimension and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education that are in line with the findings of the studies carried out by Terry (2005), Hynd (2004), Aminizadeh (2005), and Mehralizadeh (2008). Thus, it is required that opportunities for key and strategic improvement and other changes be identified and prioritized. Moreover, instrumental processes and performance objectives must be set and motivation to help staff's creativity and potential gifts flourish and bloom.

10. Conclusions

Regarding the fact that EFQM is one of the powerful evaluation instruments through which strengths and weaknesses in different areas can be identified, employing the modern and innovated assessment methods based on EFQM in Iranian organizations is expanding and the assessment of service quality in governmental and non-governmental sectors through the present model is highly appreciated and used. As stated in the review of the related literature, this model consists of two important areas of enablers and results. 'Enablers' are the elements that enable the organizations to reach excellent goals (causes to help achieve the goals), and 'results' is indicative of the achievements from having appropriately applied the enablers (the outcomes of the cause emergence). Since educational system is one of the most important vehicles and centers of educating and developing human resources for different sections of a country, the researchers were determined to investigate the performance of Joghatay Office of Education by using the organizational excellence model so that they could analyze the status quo to see which sections might require improving and how the principals could set out to repair the areas in need of improvement. The EFQM model is based on the logic that excellence of an organization depends on the performance of its customers, staff, and society and is achieved through effective leadership which plans the strategies and policies of the organization and is supported by the staff, resource partners, and processes. Moreover, thanks to its comprehensive continuous improving power-cycle, the present model serves as a very constructive framework to improve the structure quality in an organization. Based on the findings, organizations can decide where actions are needed to be taken to enhance the enablers to get better results in the prospective evaluations. In general, the criteria that are used in the evaluation of performance must enjoy such specific features as accuracy, effectiveness, and preciseness to boost the evaluation process. The national and international studies carried out inside and outside the country based on the organizational excellence model confirm these features and at present this model is introduced and used as one of the most powerful models.

Therefore, with the results obtained from the present study it could be concluded that there was a significant relationship between the EFQM organizational excellence model and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education in the educational year of 2013-14. Further, it was concluded that:

10.1 there was a significant relationship between the Leadership dimension and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education.

10.2 there was a significant relationship between the Policy and Strategy dimension and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education.

10.3 there was a significant relationship between the People (Staff) dimension and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education.

10.4 there was a significant relationship between the Partnerships and Resources dimension and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education.

10.5 there was a significant relationship between the Processes dimension and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education.

11. Implicational suggestions

For the main research hypothesis 'There is a significant relationship between the organizational excellence model of EFQM and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education.' it is suggested that principals and schooling authorities use modern methods of evaluation based on EFQM in educational system.

Based on the first research sub-hypothesis 'There is a significant relationship between the Leadership and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education.' it is suggested that principals and schooling authorities support the policies and strategies of the organization and act as the value and moral examples themselves. It is also suggested that feedback be taken from the staff to improve the strategies of the organization and enable the creativity, innovativeness, and motivation. In addition, managers of organizations should lead the movement towards the excellence by continuously supporting them.

According to the second sub-hypothesis of the study ‘There is a significant relationship between the Policy and Strategy and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education.’ it is suggested that policies and strategies of the organization be based on the needs and expectations of the staff. It is also suggested that they be established upon the national and local regulations around the staff’s present and prospective activities. In addition, policies and strategies should be revised and updated.

According to the third sub-hypothesis of the research ‘There is a significant relationship between the People (Staff) and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education.’ it is suggested that the organization employ the innovated methods to improve the operational methodology. It is also suggested that social and cultural activities be encouraged and promoted in all the employment conditions and justice be guaranteed. Moreover, it is recommended that educational and development programs be devised based on the staff’s abilities and skills that would be needed in future.

As for the fourth sub-hypothesis of the study ‘There is a significant relationship between the Partnerships and Resources and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education.’ it is suggested that financial resources be used to support the policies and strategies, plans, programs, and long-range and short-range goals and they [financial resources] be optimally used. It is also suggested that the assets including the buildings, equipment, and materials be used to improve the performance in the time-process specified. In addition, structured partnership relations should be creatively and thoughtfully developed for the key and strategic partnerships. Finally, it is suggested that staff be encouraged for individual and group participation and appraisal system of incentives and fringe benefits be developed.

The last sub-hypothesis of the study ‘There is a significant relationship between the Process and the performance of Joghatay Office of Education.’ concerns the processes current in the organization. Since ‘Processes’ dimension plays a great role in advancement of an organization, it is suggested that management of the organization set up and run training courses (crash and long term ones) to escalate the staff’s information and let them know what the issues in the organization and the disparaging culprits of the low level quality of the services are. It is also suggested that a technical committee be formed to receive the criticisms and suggestions on the rendered services and the process improvement which [criticisms and suggestions], having been analyzed, can be incorporated into the system and implemented.

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