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## **BUSINESS EXCELLENCE MODELS IN MANAGEMENT – BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS**

*The purpose of the article is to identify key publications on business excellence model; to present perceptions of excellence in management theory and some different groups of business excellence models; as well as to show benefits and limitations of business excellence models used by organizations.*

**Keywords:** Excellence, Business Excellence Model (BEM), Enterprise Excellence (EE)

### **1. Introduction**

Category of excellence has been the subject of interest many generations of thinkers – philosophers, researchers, practitioners (Platon, Aristotle, Pascal, Peters, Waterman, 1995; Peters, 2010; Oakland, 2003; Dahlgard-Park, Dahlgard, 2007). Its roots began in the distant times, and attempts to define the category of excellence concern different aspects. Excellence is a change in philosophy, culture or strategy. It is a form of conceiving the business world. Excellence can be understood and developed in several ways. Philosophers saw the main source of human excellence in human's wisdom. For example the mission of Socrates was to make the Athenians want to take care of "welfare of their souls" rather than striving for worldly affairs. Socrates believed in the immortality of the soul, and that the gods had singled him out as a divine emissary. He had argued all that they should not care so much, nor about the body, nor about the money, but about the soul "...which should be as best as possible", because "...bravery does not grow from money, but money and any other human goods (private and public) grow from bravery" (Platon, 2002, p. 23). Awareness of the fact that something is unknown is called by Socrates human's wisdom; this is the source of human's excellence.

According to Aristotle the source of excellence is bravery (e.g., the bravery of the eye makes it good for both the eye and its function, because thanks to the eye's bravery we can see well). Aristotle reasoned that humans must have a function specific to humans, and that this function must be an activity of the soul in accordance with reason. Aristotle identified such an optimum activity of the soul as

"happiness" or sometimes "well being". To have the potential of ever being happy in this way necessarily requires a good character, often translated as ethical excellence. Human's bravery makes they become good and do things right (Aristoteles, 2002, p. 54). Excellence in the tradition of Greek philosopher is closely linked with the idea of good, which may be defined by specific characteristics or actions which describes.

The uniqueness of humans underlined also representatives of the contemporary philosophy. B. Pascal, for example, "compares humans to cane, but thinking cane". „...Even if the universe crushed a man, a man would be, and so much nobler than what it kills because he knows that dies, and knows that the universe has an advantage over him” (Pascal, 2002, pp. 120-121).

According to Confucius self-controlling and self-development through long life training and education are seen as a method of execution of the entire human potential and as a way of achieving harmony in society in general. He underlined the unique role of leaders - the brilliant people, excellence people. Excellence in this context means doing ordinary, everyday things and it is not depends on comparing the results with others. It should refer to the human's efforts how they constantly mobilize themselves, are excellent and use their ability throughout the whole life.

## **2. Methodology**

The main research methodology is the literature review regarding business excellence models. Firstly we concerned our efforts to search and select scientific articles on excellence, excellence models and business excellence models. For this purpose we used Emerald database and bibliometric method. This is a quantitative method. The aim of this stage of the study was better capture the entirety of the research and to use in our study only scientific articles published in peer-reviewed journals stored in the database Emerald. This section presents also the results of the structure analysis of collected publications. Next stage of the study is a qualitative analysis of collected publications. The aim was the literature review in terms of answers to three research questions adopted as presented below:

1. How is perceived the excellence in management theory?
2. What sort of different groups of business excellence models can be identified?
3. What are the benefits and limitations of business excellence models used by organizations?

This paper is organized into seven sections. Introduction is section one. In section 2, a research methodology is presented to explore published papers. In section 3, identification of key articles in the area of excellence is presented. Section 4, 5 and

6 presents findings of the literature review according to accepted research questions. Finally, conclusions are presented in section 7.

### 3. Identification of key articles in the area of excellence

To identify key articles in the area of excellence we use resources collected and available in an electronic database Emerald. We took into account only subscribed articles. Figure 1 presents the results of the search.

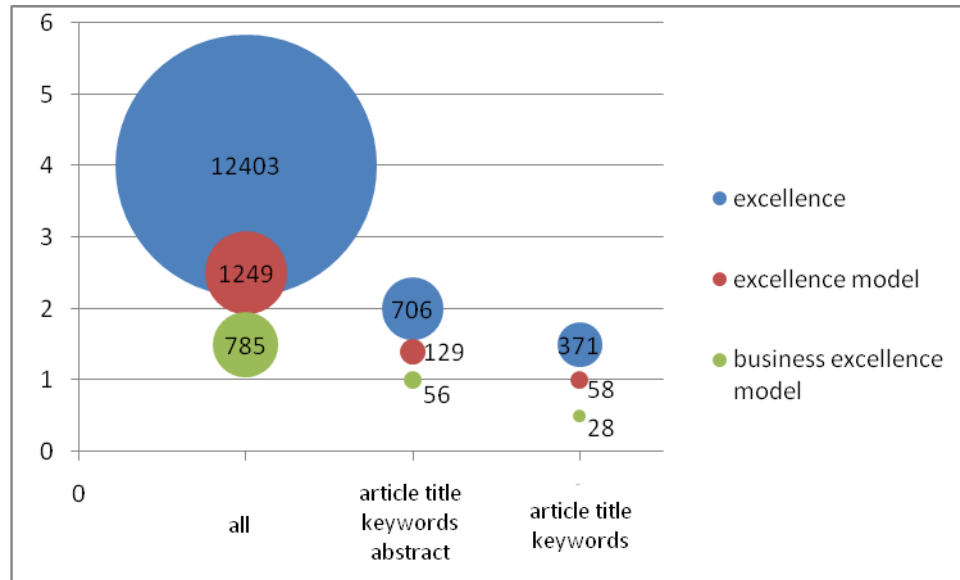


Figure 1. Number of publications in the subsequent stages of literature’s selection from Emerald base.

Figure 1 presents the comparison of achieved results. We search for three phrases: excellence, excellence model and business excellence model. In first stage we searched for all articles, then results were limited to publications with searched phrase in article title or keywords or abstract. In third stage we concentrated our searching only to publications with searched phrase in article title or keywords. From all publications in Emerald the most had the word “excellence” (above 12 thousands), second place (nearly 10% of this number) had phrase “excellence model” (1,2 thousands), last was “business excellence model” with 785 publications. Because of so unexpectedly large number of publications on “business excellence model” we decided that this phrase (corresponding directly with research area) will be the basis for further research. In second stage of the study we limited the results to 56 publications and in third stage to 28 publications. Finally we decided 28 publications to take into consideration as a base to the quality analysis. Structure analysis of collected publications shows that there are above

80% of all papers was published after 2000 year. The most popular type of publications was “research paper” and “case study”. Through cross-checking analysis - review of all abstracts first and then full publications - 17 papers were identified as suitable to review for this paper (published between 2000 and 2011). So finally we decided to create a final list with 17 papers important for further research.

#### **4. Perception of Excellence in Management Theory**

Phenomenon of excellence is not easy to “catch” and evaluate. In the organization’s management literature can be found many attempts to define the concept of excellence and to build models that contribute to the exploitation of the possibilities and capabilities for achieving organizational excellence. Authors in a similar way define the category of excellence and improvement. And so for example: improvement refers to raising the efficiency of the functioning of the organization (Duraj, 2004, p. 28); improvements are the areas that changes in the activities of each organization (Stabryła, 2008, p. 258); excellence means each deliberately implemented improvement placed in the executive and management system of the organization, aimed at improving the efficiency of organizational functioning (Lisiński, 2011, p. 116); organization’s improving means raising organizational efficiency of its functioning, it is not related only to changes in the environment. It is an integral part of the operation of the company and is part of the strategy (Mikołajczyk, 2002, p. 17). Such understanding of excellence category implies system approach including system thinking as cause-effect method which allows organization to realize continues improvements. In process of continuous improvement is important to be aware that it is always unfinished. This is precisely the potential of excellence models as an optimal orientation for the strategic management of competitive companies.

The place of excellence category can be seen following through evolution of the quality concept (Martin-Castilla, Rodriguez-Ruiz, 2008, p. 136): inspection; quality control (emphasis 1<sup>st</sup>: prevention; emphasis 2<sup>nd</sup>: product and processes); quality assurance (emphasis 1<sup>st</sup>: customer; emphasis 2<sup>nd</sup>: continuous improvement); total quality; excellence (emphasis on ethics aspects and social commitment). Another describe a so-called evolution of excellence based on a series of phases started form the pre-excellence and leading to today’s excellence 5.0 which is describe as an “innovative integrated development which is fundamentally viewed as a combination of strategic management and change” (Hermel, Ramis-Pujol, 2003). In Management Sciences excellence as important issue has become a subject of interest for many researcher representing both science and practice of management.

The category of excellence was taken up by such authors as for example: T. Peters, R. Waterman, S.M. Dahlgaard-Park and J.J. Dahlgaard, J.S. Oakland, N.L. Frigon and H.K. Jackson, as well as representatives of such organizations as: School of St. Gallen, Mc Kinsey or Toyota. Some eminent thinkers, e.g. Deming, Ishikawa, Peters, Imai etc. have advocated a quality as the foundation stone of excellence; whereas other eminent experts like Juran, Crosby have focused on the immediate needs of the business (Sharma, Talwar, 2007, p. 4).

**5. Different groups of business excellence models**

The review of business excellence models of the organization shows that they can be divided into some different groups. On the basis of our study there were identified three main groups of business excellence models: international and national Quality Awards (European, American, Japan, Polish, etc.), ISO Standards and works of scientists, researchers and practitioners. Table 1 shows three main groups of business excellence models of the organization.

Table 1. Three main groups of business excellence models.

Excellence models according to		
Quality Awards	ISO Standards	Academics, researchers, practitioners
<p><b>1. Most famous Business Excellence Models (BEM) used as global reference models:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EFQM Excellence Model in Europe (European Foundation for Quality Management)</li> <li>• MBNQA in USA (Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award)</li> <li>• Deming Prize in Japan</li> </ul> <p><b>2. National Quality Awards (NQAs), e.g.:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polish Quality Award</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requirements of standard ISO 9001</li> <li>• Self assessment according to ISO 9004</li> <li>• Self assessment according to ISO 10014</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T. Peters, R. Waterman</li> <li>• J.S. Oakland</li> <li>• H.J. Leavitt</li> <li>• P. Senge</li> <li>• S.M. Dahlgaard-Oakland Park and J.J. Dahlgaard,</li> <li>• N.L. Frigon and H.K. Jackson</li> <li>• School of St. Gallen</li> <li>• Mc Kinsey</li> <li>• Toyota, etc.</li> </ul>

These three main groups of business excellence models were describe below.

**5.1. Excellence according to national and international Quality Awards**

There are business excellence models described by the criteria used in national and international Quality Awards, such as: the European Quality Award – EQA (with the EFQM Excellence Model), the Malcolm Baldrige Quality Award (USA), W.E. Deming’s Prize (Japan) or the Polish Quality Award. The Deming Prize was the first award, established in 1951. It was set up by the Union of Japanese Scientists and Engineers (JUSE) to commemorate W.E. Deming’s contribution to the Japanese industry in quality area and to promote further the continuing development of quality control in Japan. The Prize is given to companies that have achieved distinctive performance through the application of company-wide quality control (Politis, Litos, Grigoroudis, Moustakis, 2009, p. 463; Talwar, 2011, pp. 22-24). The MBNQA (Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award) was established in 1987 by the US government as a statement of national intention to provide quality leadership and improve the competitiveness of the USA companies (Talwar, 2011, pp. 22-24). The European Quality Award (EQA), known as the EFQM Excellence Model, was established in 1991 with the support of the European Organisation for Quality and the European Commission (Politis, Litos, Grigoroudis, Moustakis, 2009, pp. 463-464). The EFQM Excellence Model is a management framework, often used as a diagnostic tool to implement the principle of continuous improvement for organizations which implemented TQM strategy (EFQM Transition Guide, 2009, pp. 1, 6). In the 1990s there were very few scholars exploring the EFQM model. Studies on the EFQM model were actively started in 2000, because the majority of papers were published during that time (Kim, Kumar, Murphy, 2010, p. 690). The EFQM Excellence Model is based on 9 criteria divided into two areas of "potential" and "results" (Vorria, Bohoris, 2009, p. 117).

The Deming Prize, MBNQA and EFQM excellence model are the famous and recognized worldwide quality awards. With the objective of helping industries to enhance competitiveness in their respective countries, several national governments and industry associations came forward and established national (NQA) and regional (RQA) quality awards to serve as business excellence models. Most European countries adopted the EFQM excellence model as the basis for national quality awards during the period 1994-1998; however, there has been a tendency towards home-developed national quality awards or modified EFQM models during the decade 2000 onwards. Simultaneously with Europe, several countries in Asia evolved their own business excellence models too, mostly using the EFQM excellence model and MBNQA as their reference (e.g. India in 1994, Singapore and Japan in 1995, Philippines in 1997, Fiji in 1998, Thailand in 2001). The study of Talwar allowed identifying 100 BEMs/NQAs being used in 82 countries worldwide (Talwar, 2011, pp. 22-24). Some findings of this study shows that: three major

BEMs (i.e. MBNQA, EFQM and the Deming Prize) are recognized worldwide and used as the basis of most BEMs in various countries; BEMs/NQAs are dynamic, are reviewed periodically, and have also changed over the years; the objectives and core values of most of the BEMs/NQAs are similar, and focus on enhancing the global competitiveness of companies of their respective countries; evaluation criteria of most of the BEMs/NQAs are similar although they differ in the relative criteria scores; there are identified three new criteria for BEMs - “values & process flow”, “universal wellbeing” and “sustainable success”; the Deming Prize follows a hand-holding approach and is highly prescriptive supported with “TQM diagnosis” by the assessors - in contrast, most BEMs, including MBNQA and EFQM, are non-prescriptive by nature (Talwar, 2011, pp. 28-29).

Carrying out the process of self-assessment is one of inseparable conditions to receive the prize. Self-assessment makes the extraordinary opportunity for organization to identify and often to discover their strengths and weaknesses (so-called potential improvements). Continues improvements help organization following the right path towards excellence, they make a right step in right direction on the "excellence roadmap".

**5.2.Excellence according to ISO standards**

On the other hand there are some ISO standards. ISO 9001 is the most famous standard. In this standard there are requirements for quality management system. Meeting the requirements of ISO 9001 standard allows moving organization closer to excellent. There are some similarities and differences between quality award models and ISO 9001 (see table 2).

Table 2. Similarities and differences between quality award models and ISO 9001

<b>Quality-award models</b>	<b>Similarities</b>	<b>ISO 9001</b>
concentrate on evaluating organizational progress toward TQM	<i>TQM</i>	promotes companies to implement TQM-centered principles (eight)
the audit aims at identifying organizational strengths and improvement areas	<i>Audits</i>	the audit is an essential condition to obtain or renew a certification
emphasize process management to achieve organizational performance	<i>Process management</i>	emphasize process management to achieve organizational performance
<b>Quality-award models</b>	<b>Differences</b>	<b>ISO 9000</b>
the objective is to evaluate organization achievement and enhance awareness about the importance of quality and	<i>Purposes</i>	aims to assist companies to establish and maintain an effective QMS

high performance		
cover all management areas, such as leadership and performance	<i>Managerial areas</i>	focuses on only key processes and systems that influence quality and operational performance
the importance of each category is unequally weighted	<i>Importance of each category</i>	all requirements are weighed equally
have a scoring scheme using numerical scores out of 1,000 points	<i>Scoring scheme</i>	there is no weighting of managerial areas or requirements (certification or termination)
applicants of the award models are in high levels of the TQM evolution stages	<i>Maturity level</i>	ISO 9000 certified companies are typically in an early stage toward establishing TQM

Source: based on (Kim, Kumar, Murphy, 2010, p. 686-687).

In terms of main similarities: the quality award models (the EFQM and the MBNQA models) and ISO 9001 follow the principles of TQM that have ramifications for all functions of organizations. All three models encourage also companies to conduct value-added audits and emphasize process management to achieve organizational performance (Kim, Kumar, Murphy, 2010, p. 686). With regards to the differences, the three models have different purposes and managerial areas. Other differences are in importance of each category, scoring scheme and in maturity level (Kim, Kumar, Murphy, 2010, p. 686-687).

There are also other ISO standards, which contain e.g. ISO 9004, ISO 10014. The self-assessment process is presented in these standards and outlines a path for building excellence in organization. The main criteria of self-assessment process according to ISO 10014 concern eight quality management principles while in ISO 9004 criteria are taken from quality management system requirements. Process of self-assessment, similarly to self-assessment process in quality award models, makes a lot of opportunity to the organizations and lead organizations to try sustaining the excellence. This process is continuous and never ending.

### **5.3.Excellence according to academics, researchers and practitioners of management**

The category of excellence in the context of the organizational management and organizational results was presented for the first time 25 years ago by T. Peters and R. Waterman in their book “In Search of Excellence...” (Peters, Waterman, 1995). Model for analysis used by T. Peters and R. Waterman was a model of McKinsey – well known as McKinsey’s 7S framework. This model consists of the seven criteria

of success needed for achieving excellence in the organization divided into two groups: hardware which included: strategy and structure; software which included: style, systems, staff, skills, shared values (Peters, Waterman, 1995, p. 10). Although T. Peters and R. Waterman did not define the category of excellence but through manager's work observation they came to the conclusion that managers are able to do more when they are careful about all 7S, and not only about hardware (structure and strategy). Additionally they noticed that real changes in large institutions are a function of manager understands of the organizational complexity and relationships between all key success criteria in 7S framework.

In 1985 T. Peters as co-author with N. Austin published work concerning excellence: "A Passion for Excellence" (Peters, Austin, 1985). The conclusions of previous studies have been simplified by the authors and presented by less complex model. According to T. Peters and N. Austin excellence is conditioned by four key success indicators. These are: employees, customer care, continuous innovation and leadership (Management by Wandering Around – MBWA) which combines the first three indicators by gaining experience in the functioning of the entire organization and its knowledge at all levels (Peters, Austin, 1985; Dahlgaard-Park, Dahlgaard, 2007, p. 374).

TQM Model according to J.S. Oakland includes such items as: planning, process, performance, people (4P) and culture, communication and commitment (3C) (Oakland, 2003, pp. 26-27). 4P belong to hardware group should be integrated with software (3C) group. Only through high organizational culture, reliably and quickly communication and suitable commitment of all people in the organization can understand its processes, plan its development, control and achieve its determined performance.

Another proposal for a model of excellence is proposed by S.M. Dahlgaard-Park and J.J. Dahlgaard (Dahlgaard-Park, Dahlgaard, 2007, p. 372). Their excellence model of organizational excellence is based on following "the 4Ps": people; partnership; processes; products. The 4Ps model consists of five components, among which leadership is a basis for organizational excellence (Dahlgaard-Park, 2009, p. 11). This model suggests that the basis for achieving the organizational excellence is to have excellent people, led by the leaders. Excellence people create the excellent partnership that creates excellence processes and products. This all elements together are the basis for defining the characteristics of excellent organization, which over time can become a foundation for building excellent communities and societies (excellent world). According to S.M. Dahlgaard-Park excellence can be attained if you: care more than others think is wise; risk more

than others think is safe; dream more than others think is practical and expect more than others think is possible (Dahlgaard-Park, 2009, pp. 5-6).

Other organizational excellence model was presented by St. Gallen School (Lisiecka, 2002, p. 179). This model joined hard elements from 4P model of McKinsey (strategy, structure, systems) with other three soft elements (culture of the organization, management style, problem solving).

Another approach to the construction of a model of organizational excellence can be found in the work of the N.L. Frigon and H.K. Jackson (Frigon, Jackson, 2009, p. 8). In their model of Enterprise Excellence they used ideas from previously models of excellence and expanded them by adding others elements of value chain.

Other elements which one can take into consideration during the building the excellence model may be those which are presented in the "4P Model of the Toyota Production System (TPS). The 4P Model of the TPS developed by Toyota Corporation is based on: the philosophy of management, processes, people and partners and problem solving (Liker, 2004). Listed above 4P of Toyota are based on the 14 principles of management formulated also by Toyota. The 14 principles of management were divided into four categories. The 4P Model can be considered as a validated example of organizational excellence model because of many years' standing using it in practice. It confirms large experience of Toyota corporation on the road to the excellence on the automobile market.

According to P. Senge there are five basic techniques (disciplines) of self-improvement of the organization. These are: personal mastery; mental models; building shared vision; team learning; systems thinking (Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, Smith, 2008, pp. 19-20). Each of the presented above disciplines are needed to achieve excellence. It means that one cannot build the organization without a continuous learning of the organization. Organizations learn only through learning of individuals. This does not mean that learning of individual guarantees a learning of whole organization, but in general without individuals learning does not occur the learning of the whole organization. Individual learning is a precondition for organizational learning and organizational "walking" towards excellence. To activating cycle of deep learning are needed five basic disciplines of learning (Senge, 2006).

## **6. Benefits and limitations of business excellence models**

The study of different business excellence models shows that there are many benefits accrued from their implementation. B. Talwar recognized among them: improving of process orientation, customer orientation and improvement orientation; improvements in product quality, market share, sales, profits, employee

morale and competitiveness; the award winning companies outperform similar companies in their industry; BEMs/NQAs have provided roadmap for excellence and facilitated thousands of organizations across the world to measure their level of excellence, identify opportunities for improvement and take actions for making improvements (Talwar, 2011, p. 30).

Among the most important limitations of BEM is a danger that organizations start focusing on winning the award rather than focusing on opportunities for making improvements or on meeting the requirements of quality management system only for receiving the certificate (Talwar, 2011, p. 30). Another danger is that organizations focus their efforts only on achieving specific financial performance at present and will not see a long time perspective. These models do not guarantee the sustainability of excellence. This gives rise to the risk of use of unethical means and practices to maximize the short-term gains, as has been witnessed recently in the global economic fiasco (Talwar, 2011, p. 33).

## **7. Conclusion**

After the study about excellence models the Authors of this paper came to following conclusions. Excellence category follows evolution of the quality concept. In Management Sciences excellence as important issue has become a subject of interest for many academics, researchers and practitioners, such as: T. Peters, R. Waterman, S.M. Dahlgaard-Park and J.J. Dahlgaard, J.S. Oakland, N.L. Frigon and H.K. Jackson, School of St. Gallen, Mc Kinsey or Toyota. There were identified three main groups of business excellence models: international and national Quality Awards (European, American, Japan, Polish, etc.), ISO Standards and works of scientists, researchers and practitioners. From implementation of BEMs accrue some benefits and limitations, e.g.: BEMs have provided roadmap for excellence and facilitated thousands of organizations across the world to measure their level of excellence, identify opportunities for improvement and take actions for making improvements; focusing on winning the award rather than focusing on opportunities for making improvements or on meeting the requirements of quality management system only for receiving the certificate.

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