



Original Article (Qualitative)

## Identification and leveling of factors affecting the acceptance of excellence model in Islamic Azad University

Seyedeh Somayeh Mousavi Siah Deleh<sup>1</sup> , Samad Jabbari Asl<sup>2</sup> , Musa Rezvani Chaman Zamin<sup>2</sup> 

1- PhD student, Department of Public Administration, Astara Branch, Islamic Azad University, Astara, Iran

2- Assistant Professor, Department of Management, Astara Branch, Islamic Azad University, Astara, Iran

**Receive:**

08 October 2023

**Revise:**

17 November 2023

**Accept:**

08 March 2024




**Keywords:**

organizational readiness, excellence model, managerial factors, external factors, attitudinal-behavioral factors.

**Abstract**

The purpose of this research is to identify and stratify the factors affecting the acceptance of excellence model in Islamic Azad University with the interpretive structural modeling approach. The research method is applicable in terms of purpose, qualitative in terms of implementation, and exploratory in nature. The statistical population of the research includes 10 management professors of the Azad Universities of Gilan province. Theoretical sampling method was used. The data collection tool is a semi-structured interview. In order to analyze the data, the theme analysis method was used, and in order to level the identified criteria, the interpretive structural modeling method was used in MACMIC software. The results of the data analysis from the interviews revealed three main factors including: management factors, external factors, and attitudinal-behavioral factors; and 24 sub-indexes which were categorized in the form of the mentioned three factors. The results of the leveling of the identified sub-indicators also showed that factors such as weakness in macro policies, weakness in predicting specific financial resources and low culture of applying the excellence model in universities (related to the category of external factors), formulating and implementing effective strategies in order to implement the model of excellence in university branches, as well as the correct understanding of the current situation and needs (related to the category of managerial factors) and the usefulness of using the model in the career promotion of executives (related to the category of attitudinal-behavioral factors) are among the most important indicators affecting the method of the model of excellence in Islamic Azad University.

**Please cite this article as (APA):** Mousavi Siah Deleh, S. S., Jabbari Asl, S., & Rezvani Chaman Zamin, M. (2024). Identification and leveling of factors affecting the acceptance of excellence model in Islamic Azad University. *Management and Educational Perspective*, 6(1), 231-258.

<b>Publisher:</b> Iranian Business Management Association	<a href="https://doi.org/10.22034/jmep.2023.419895.1250">https://doi.org/10.22034/jmep.2023.419895.1250</a>	
<b>Corresponding Author:</b> Samad Jabbari Asl		
<b>Email:</b> samadjabari1339@gmail.com	<b>Creative Commons:</b> CC BY 4.0	

## Extended abstract

### Introduction

At the level of educational institutions, academic excellence is at the forefront of modern trends and approaches for the development of university performance, because excellence of universities helps ensure the expansion of the concept of quality in all university facilities and services, and improving efficiency. The processes at all organizational levels, absorbing new technologies, verifying the competitive position, creating and developing and activating their competitive capabilities and investing its resources in providing better academic services is in accordance with international standards (bin Abdullah Al-Subaie, 2022). Academic excellence as explained in Tasopoulou & Tsiotras (2017) represents the input through which higher education institutions can improve their level of excellence through their ability to self-assess and work to achieve the aspirations of students and faculty beyond normal expectations. The concept of institutional excellence in higher education institutions as mentioned by Kok & McDonald (2017) refers to behavior that leads to excellence in all research, teaching and social service functions through excellence in strategy and shared values, leadership, Organizational culture. By using excellence models, in addition to the fact that an organization will be able to measure its success in implementing and achieving plans at different times, it can also compare its performance with other similar organizations, especially the best ones (Ebrahimi et al, 2017). If the obstacles to the appropriate and effective implementation of comprehensive quality management in higher education institutions are properly removed and the ground is provided for quality flourishing in universities and higher education institutions, countless benefits will be gained from improving the quality of these institutions (Alizadeh Attar & Taghizadeh Herat, 2016). The correct preparation of the organization in accepting the excellence model will reduce the time and cost of implementation and increase the success rate of actions (Miake-Lye et al, 2020). Based on this, the current research is looking for an answer to this question: How is the identification and leveling of factors affecting the acceptance of excellence model in Islamic Azad University with the interpretive structural modeling approach?

### Theoretical Framework

#### Organizational Excellence

The meaning of excellence model is the set of management structure that provides reasons for progress and improvement by relying on basic principles and concepts and paying attention to the main criteria of comprehensive quality management and self-evaluation system. Further explanation that the excellence model can be a tool to measure the degree of establishment of systems in the organization and self-evaluation and a guide to identify and determine the way managers work to develop performance. From this point of view, the message of excellence model is the answer to the following two questions: 1) how this model is identified as a suitable management structure and 2) who should play a central role in this chain of communication and interactions. The first level of the excellence model includes general goals and in the next levels it is divided into quantitative and measurable scales. In a definition from the point of view of the Organizational Excellence Foundation, organizational excellence is referred to the sum of leadership values and transformation strategies and skills (Safari & Ebadi Ziaei, 2019). EFQM organizational excellence model in response to the need to improve the competitiveness of European organizations by fourteen large European companies (Bosch, Renault, Fiat, BT, Bull, Electrolux, KLM, Nestlé, Olivetti, Phillips, Sulzer, Volkswagen, Razalt, Ciba) has been agreed and signed in the European Commission (Akrami, 2018).



Antony et al, (2023) in a research investigated organizational readiness factors for the implementation of the 4.0 quality model with an intercontinental study and future research directions. Their findings showed that the five most important reasons for not adopting Quality 4.0 are lack of resources, inability to link Quality 4.0 with the company's strategy and goals, lack of understanding of the benefits, high initial investment, and current quality management strategy. Also, three main readiness factors for the successful adoption of Quality 4.0 were identified as follows: senior management commitment, leadership, and organizational culture.

Ezzati Rad et al, (2022) in a research identified the factors of organizational readiness for the commercialization of university knowledge based on the entrepreneurial ecosystem: development of a scale and experimental test. Their research showed that the variables of human resources, knowledge production infrastructure, interactions, strategy, culture, and laws and policies respectively have the greatest impact on organizational readiness for academic knowledge commercialization.

### **Research methodology**

The research method is applicable in terms of purpose, qualitative in terms of implementation, and exploratory in nature. The statistical population of the research includes 10 management professors of the Azad Universities of Gilan province. Theoretical sampling method was used. The data collection tool is a semi-structured interview.

### **Research findings**

In order to analyze the data, the theme analysis method was used, and in order to level the identified criteria, the interpretive structural modeling method was used in MACMIC software. The results of the data analysis from the interviews revealed three main factors including: management factors, external factors, and attitudinal-behavioral factors; and 24 sub-indexes which were categorized in the form of the mentioned three factors. The results of the leveling of the identified sub-indicators also showed that factors such as weakness in macro policies, weakness in predicting specific financial resources and low culture of applying the excellence model in universities (related to the category of external factors), formulating and implementing effective strategies in order to implement the model of excellence in university branches, as well as the correct understanding of the current situation and needs (related to the category of managerial factors), and the usefulness of using the model in the career promotion of executives (related to the category of attitudinal-behavioral factors) are among the most important indicators affecting the method of the model of excellence in Islamic Azad University.

### **Conclusion**

The current research was carried out with the aim of identifying and leveling the factors affecting the acceptance of excellence model in Islamic Azad University with the interpretive structural modeling approach. This result is in line with the researches of Escrig-Tena et al, (2019), Mutula (2010), Machado (2007), Watkins et al, (2004), Black and Porter (1996), Ghodrati et al, (2014). Antony et al, (2023) also mention in their research that in order to implement excellence models, a common culture must emerge in the organization. Azad University has different branches, and consequently, it cannot be expected that its governing culture will be the same in terms of executive standards and implementation of the plan to accept the model of excellence. The results of this research show that as the culture in Azad University is pushed towards supporting the establishment of such models, the university's readiness to accept its correct implementation will also increase.



According to the results of the research, the following proposal is presented:

- 1- The university should prepare and compile a checklist of all the indicators presented in the research and score (for example, from 1 to 10) for each of the indicators in terms of the university's readiness in that field.
- 2- Specialist experts should give points to each department in terms of the level of preparation of the university.
- 3- For the indicators that scored below the average or have a lower score compared to other indicators, planning should be done with appropriate timing to develop readiness in that sector with the help of the custodian area.
- 4- The custodian areas should send their continuous report regarding the improvement of the level of preparation of their subordinate unit to the university president.