

Impact of Adoption of Business Excellence Framework on Organizational Performance: A Systematic Review of the Literature and Development of Conceptual Model

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Abstract

Since 1987, many business excellence frameworks (BEFs) have been developed, post the launch of the “Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award and Baldrige Excellence Framework”. BEFs are considered transformational tools to drive the current performance and sustainably secure future growth. This study explored the effectiveness of the adoption of BEFs in improving organizational performance and determined whether the adoption of BEFs is triggered by a desire to win a national award or as an initiative for organizational transformation. Considering that many changes have occurred in the excellence framework over the past 15 years, this study focused on the literature published after 2005. Using the PRISMA framework, the authors shortlisted 53 papers for this study. Many studies indicated that the framework was primarily used for the recognition process of the national-level award program, and organizations considered the process of winning the award as a destination instead of a significant milestone in the excellence journey. Moreover, this study determined that insufficient data were presented in the available literature to investigate the impact of adopting a BEF on organizations. Rigorous requirements of the award program and complexity in understanding abstract-level requirements were the major reasons for not initiating the adoption of the BEF for organizational transformation. Based on the findings of this systematic literature survey, a conceptual model was established to understand triggers for BEF adoption and the roadmap leading to organizational impact. Researchers in the future may use this model for examining the effect of BEFs adoption organizational Performance and transformation.

Keywords: Business Excellence, EFQM, Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework, MBNQA, Organizational Performance, Transformation, Organizational Performance Impact

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1.0 Introduction

India ranked 43rd in the “annual World Competitiveness Index 2021” prepared by “the Institute for Management Development”, which studied COVID-19 impact on economies globally. Because of increasing disruptions and competition pressure, building competitiveness and organizational transformation have become imperative. Many business excellence frameworks (BEFs, also referred to as “business excellence models”) were introduced after the launch of “The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award and Baldrige Excellence Framework” and are considered transformational tools to drive the current performance and sustainably secure the future growth.

A business excellence model can improve traditional total quality management (TQM) to a holistic management concept (‘Kim et al., 2010’). *“Business Excellence (BE) is a philosophy and a collection of guidance frameworks that can be followed by organizations to achieve excellence in strategies, business practices, and stakeholder-related performance results (Foote, J., Gaffney, N., & Evans, J. R., 2010); Kim, D. Y., Kumar, V., & Murphy, S. A., 2010)”*.

Organizational performance is a holistic measure covering all key stakeholders and strategic, financial, nonfinancial, transformational, and operational parameters aligned to the purpose and vision of the organization. In other words, organizational performance refers to the holistic performance of an organization, indicating the current performance and future focus.

After the liberalization of economic policies in the early 90s, Indian industries faced considerable competition from global makers and experienced substantial difficulty in sustaining their operations. Many Indian organizations even exited their businesses. Understanding this challenge, the “Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)” jointly with the “Export-Import Bank of India” established the “CII-EXIM Bank Awards for Business Excellence” in the year 1994, to encourage Indian organizations to adopt global best practices for building globally competitive organizations (source ciibizex.in Website accessed on 02 April 2022).

Since the inception of this award program, many Indian organizations, both from the private and public sectors, representing manufacturing, services, healthcare, education, and IT, have competed to win this award. Thus far, 12 organizations have won the highest level of Commendation for Role Model Organization & Award and more than 20 organizations have been recognized at the award or prize level (source ciibizex.in Website). In addition, nearly 500 organizations or strategic business units were recognized at different levels of maturity in their journey of excellence.

Although the growth and sustainability of role model organizations can be considered as evidence for the benefits of the adoption of business excellence, many organizations have not made considerable progress in their key organizational performance parameters despite embarking on the journey of excellence through the adoption of BEFs. Thus, whether adopting a BEF enhances organizational performance, leading to a significant business impact, remains unclear. This study examined whether the adoption of BEFs can improve organizational performance, with a specific focus on the “European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model”, “Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework”, and their derivative models, by performing a systematic literature review.

Methodology

This study examined the literature on BEFs. Because many changes have occurred in excellence frameworks over the past 15 years, this study focused on the literature published after 2005. We searched for relevant studies in EBSCO and Google Scholar by using the following keywords: business excellence, EFQM, Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework, MBNQA, organizational performance, transformation, and organizational performance impact.

We developed a conceptual model based on the approach and impact of business excellence adoption. Research gaps and future research areas were identified in this study.

Using the screening process based on the PRISMA framework, we identified 53 relevant studies. The

flowchart of paper search, elimination, and inclusion is illustrated in Figure 1. Summary of papers reviewed, journal and their ABDC rating is given in Table 1

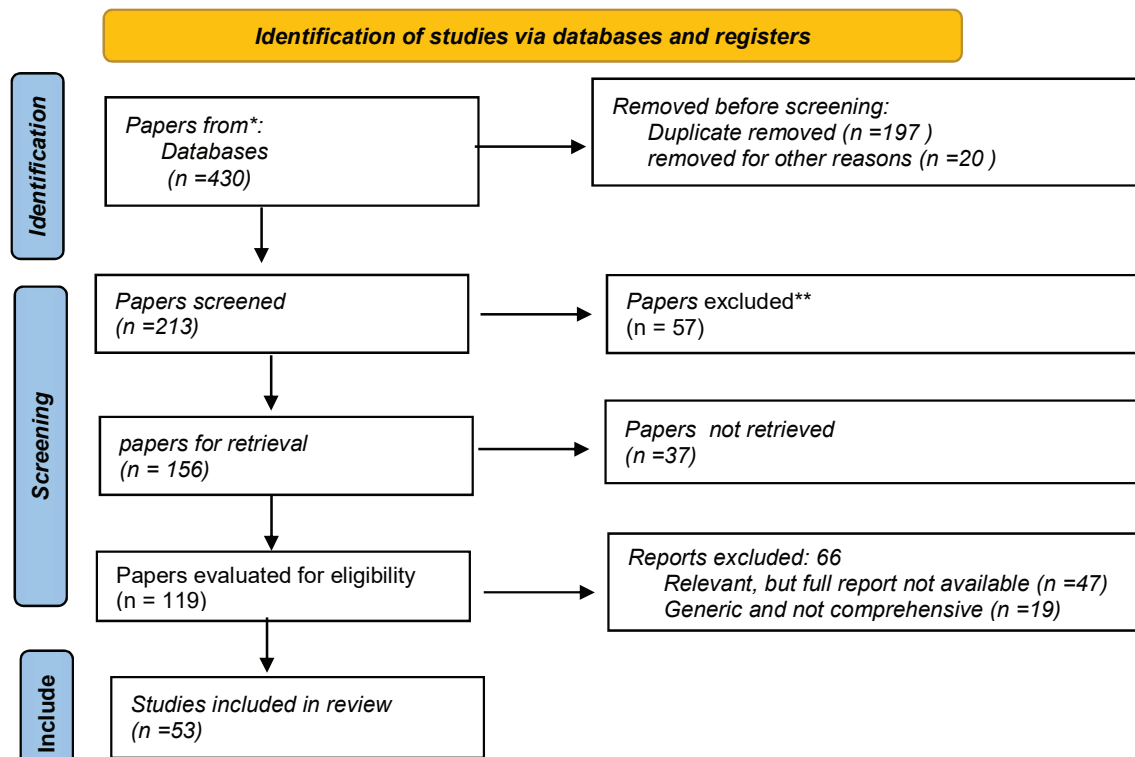


Fig 1 PRISMA framework for paper selection for this study

Summary of number of papers reviewed, major journals, and ABDC rating of the journals is given in Table -1, below

Journal Title	ABDC Rating (2019)	No of papers	% of papers
"Journal of operations management"	A*	1	2%
"Production and Operations Management"	A*	1	2%
"International Journal of Operations & Production Management".	A	2	4%
"Industrial Management & Data Systems"	A	1	2%
"International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management".	B	4	8%
"The TQM Journal".	B	5	9%
"Journal of Management History".	B	1	2%
"Benchmarking An International Journal "	B	3	6%
"International Journal of Social Economics"	B	1	2%
"Measuring Business Excellence"	B	1	2%
"Journal of Transnational Management"	C	1	2%
"Total Quality Management & Business Excellence"	C	8	15%
Total A*, A, B and C		29	55%
Others	Not Listed	24	45%

Table 1: Summary of number of papers reviewed, major journals, and ABDC rating of the journals (based on 2019 list) Source: Prepared by the author based on the papers reviewed with respect to ABDC 2019 list

2.0 Systematic Literature Review Results

Most of these studies were conducted in geographies or countries such as Europe, Spain, Australia, and UAE. Some studies were conducted based on the performance of US organizations. Even after three decades of the adoption of BEFs in India, only a few studies were conducted in the Indian context. Moreover, the studies conducted in India have mostly focused on the framework design or the relationship between practices and results or assessment scores (e.g., Dutta S K, 2007, Jayaraman R, 2013; Bandyopadhyay, P. K., & Nair, S., 2015).

Most of the included studies focused on the design of a framework or an award (38%) or investigated the relationship between enablers and results (28%). Few studies measured the impact on organizational performance (13%; Table 2).

<i>BE Framework Design Related</i>	38%
<i>BE Criteria Relationship Related</i>	28%
<i>BE Adoption Related</i>	17%
<i>BE Impact Related</i>	13%
<i>Others (Assessment, research topics etc.)</i>	4%

Table 2: Business Excellence: Primary focus area of the papers reviewed Source: Author, based on the papers reviewed

The findings of the literature review are summarized under six broad themes: 1) BEFs for assessing the national-level award program, 2) design of the BEF, 3) adoption of business excellence, 4) relationship between enablers and results, 5) impact of business excellence adoption, and 6) barriers of business excellence adoption.

2.1 Business Excellence Frameworks for Assessing the National-Level Award Program

Ghafoor and Mann (2020) reported that 56 countries have implemented an award program based on a BEF. Few countries have multiple award programs, leading to a total of 67 business excellence award

programs worldwide. Two major frameworks were widely used: the “EFQM model and the Baldrige Excellence Framework”. According to the study, 23 award programs follow “EFQM model”, 10 follow “Baldrige Excellence Framework”, and 16 adopted the derivatives of the above two frameworks. Details on the “Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award”, “Baldrige Performance Excellence Framework”, and “EFQM model” are provided in [Annexure 1](#).

Many large corporates are driving business excellence within the group through their internal programs. Few groups have institutionalized a group award. The JRDQV Awards by TATA Group set up in 1996 is an internal award program (source: <https://www.tatabex.com/about-us>). Similar approaches are followed by organizations such as Godrej Group, NTPC, and GMR.

Although these excellence models can be used for bringing new perspectives to leadership practices and organizational transformation with sustainable growth, many perceive these frameworks more as an award assessment model instead of an improvement or transformation model. Thus, whether the full benefit of these concepts was achieved to the extent envisaged by model designers remains unclear. Grigg and Mann (2008) explored how the administrators of business excellence programs promoted the framework, with a particular focus on the Australian BEF (ABEF). They observed that among the Australian Organisations, only 29 (9.5%) were aware regarding the ABEF. The link between BEF adoption and other improvement activities remains unclear for most organizations. Moreover, bottom-line benefits resulting from the adoption of the ABEF was the primary reason for the buy-in. The authors suggested forming a strong partnership with key associations to promote the framework and increasing the visibility of the program. Furthermore, for most award administrators, the impact of the ABEF was based on their perception, experience, and participation.

Yadav and de Waal (2020), by using a high-performance organization framework, compared Indian organizations with Asian organizations and determined that business excellence models emphasize certain aspects of an organization while claiming to be holistic. They noted that organisations tend to focus the criteria of the framework, when

there is an award program attached to the Business Excellence model. This lead them ignoring other key aspects of business improvement. Moreover, longitudinal research to determine whether their application increases organisational performance in a sustained manner were limited.

As the BEFs are a collection of the best practices of outstanding organizations or a set of questions on how an organization is practicing in specific areas, these frameworks are nonprescriptive and generic. Thus, their implementation steps are stemmed out of business excellence maturity assessments, which can be either an award or a diagnostic assessment, independent of any award program. The benefits of BEF adoption primarily depend on the quality of inputs received through the assessment as gaps or opportunities and the effective implementation with leadership commitment.

2.2 Design of the Business Excellence Framework

BEFs are considered transformational tools. Business performance of organizations adopting BEFs is more sustainable and holistic compared with that of their peers. Ghafoor, Grigg, Mathrani, and Mann (2020) predicted that digital transformation, Innovation, and sustainability may see high impact in the Business Excellence after the recent re-design of BEFs to include these aspects more explicitly. In the revised EFQM model, greater emphasis has been placed on steering the culture, to be successful and realize its purpose.

BEFs have been adopted by both private and public enterprises. Although these organizations have some differences in their structure, BEFs can be applied in both the sectors due to its generic nature. Raharjo and Eriksson (2017) conducted a study of Spanish organizations focusing on achieving business excellence to identify differences between private and public organizations. They reported that the leadership effect on the management of processes was significantly stronger in public organizations. However, this has not translated into results. Because the structure of public organizations in other countries can significantly differ from that in Spain, the authors suggested conducting more research in this direction.

Metaxas and Koulouriotis (2019) reported the lack of the literature on BE implementation and measurement. In addition, they indicated that no study has yet examined the key challenges of the current world. Developing measures for agility, change management, and innovation is an area with considerable potential for future research. The study identified that most frameworks do not have criteria to measure agility. Gupta and Vrat (2019) reported that national quality award models vary substantially in terms of the weight of their parameters. Further they do not include relevant parameters for a holistic organisational performance assessment. Another issue is that while few frameworks have been revising the criteria weights periodically, others remained static. Higher weightage given to results compared to enablers; may lead to unsustainable performance in the future.

Aydin and Kahraman (2019) proposed an analytical hierarchy process, using seven fuzzy scales for performance measurement of firms adopting the MBNQA. Unnikrishnan, Tikoria, and Agariya (2019) indicated that during the mid-1990s, the expressions “quality management” and “TQM” got replaced with “business excellence”. Structural equation modeling (SEM), “multivariate regression analysis”, and “analysis of variance” were the most frequently used tools in most studies. Opinion or “attitude scales” were used for “data collection” through questionnaire surveys. Most widely used tool was a 5 Point scale Likert scale.

“Breja, Banwet, and Iyer (2016)” examined “the Deming Application Prize” and identified having a strategic focus, matching to resources and capabilities, converting capabilities into distinctive competencies, and achieving and sustaining excellence are crucial. TQM can drive transformation. Bolboli and Reiche (2013) developed a holistic model of business excellence from a systematic perspective and proposed an implementation guideline for sustaining organizational excellence. Calvo-Mora et al. (2018) studied 116 Spanish companies having experience in TQM by using assessments based on “EFQM excellence model”. The findings revealed that the “EFQM model” is a valid framework for measuring social impact. Domun (2016) studied the business excellence of the Mauritian Experience and generated a framework that can be used by four

stakeholders involved in business excellence in any country, namely award custodians, government, support institutions, and enterprises. However, this framework was primarily developed using the business excellence award process. "Bou-Llusar, Escrig-Tena, Roca-Puig, and Beltrán-Martín (2009)" evaluated responses from the managers of 446 Spanish companies and observed that "social and technical dimensions" are rooted in the model and are "intercorrelated". Gupta (2013) identified 168 business practices and 29 performance indicators to measure business excellence to become a world-class organization. Dubey and Lakhanpal (2018) argued that a Country- and sector-specific excellence frameworks can enhance effectiveness.

2.3 Adoption of Business Excellence

Jayaraman (2017) indicated that, although in the past 30 years, TQM and business excellence concepts have been adopted by many companies, no systematic study has examined why Indian organizations adopt different methods to practice business excellence. In his case study, he attributes the success of TATA Steel to factors such as long-term initiatives, a comprehensive leadership structure, a rigorous review process, training resource effectiveness, and AQUIP use, a tool for strategy deployment and communication. Tickle, Mann, and Adebajo (2016) evaluated deployment practices of business excellence, that are successful. They compared strategies and practices used by organizations at different maturity levels of business excellence and observed that, the higher the maturity level, the higher the performance. Also, the likelihood of use of the specific tool are also high in such organizations. They recommended conducting further studies in other geographies.

Organizations constantly look for newer methodologies to successfully respond to the ever

Changing competitive external environment. Among various approaches, BEFs have been the most widely used in the past. Most of the BEFs have been developed for award programs by national award administrators to recognize organizations and encourage the widespread adoption of these frameworks to transform and remain competitive. Dahlgaard et al. (2013) indicated that more companies have faced problems while using BEFs because

of various issues, including highly comprehensive criteria, rigorous process, excessive resource requirements and a lack of focus, thus limiting its adaptation. They developed a new overall BEF to encourage adoption, instead of using the existing BEFs. Vartiak and Jankalova M (2017) developed a quick checklist for assessing a company's state of business excellence, helping companies to focus on many management elements, such as organization, motivation, productivity, creativity, delegation, and excellence. The checklist consists of 45 questions covering the following nine areas: "leadership; customer focus; strategic alignment; organizational learning, innovation, and improvement; people focus; partnership development; fact-based process management; result focus; and social responsibility".

Mann, Adebajo, Laosirihongthong, and Punnakitkashem (2011) investigated the practice of BEFs in Asian organizations. They examined the drivers of business excellence implementation and awareness in 74 organizations from five Asian Countries. Furthermore, they collected qualitative data from 21 discussion groups. In addition, 13 interviews with senior executives of business excellence award winners were conducted to collect qualitative data. The authors reported a link between adoption and competitive priorities. Although business excellence implementation is beneficial, many measures need to be implemented to increase awareness regarding business excellence. This is particularly crucial for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Mature organizations can contribute to promoting business excellence in their supply chain by playing a more active role in sharing and supporting.

Culture plays a vital role in business excellence success. Kassem, Ajmal, Gunasekaran, and Helo (2019) investigated the impact of culture on business excellence implementation in the Middle East region and observed that organizational culture is significantly related to business excellence. They examined four types of culture, namely mission, adaptability, involvement, and consistency, and determined a positive relationship between them and business performance.

2.4 Relationship Between Enablers and Results

Dutta (2007) indicated that quality and business excellence awards have become a major force in driving the competitiveness of Indian organizations to compete globally. However, little empirical evidence is available to validate that these frameworks improve competitiveness and indicate future competitiveness. A significant relationship exists between “key performance results”, “customer results”, and “society results”. However, relationships between “key performance” and “partnership” and between “society” and “strategy” have not yet been evaluated. Future studies should investigate the impact on practices and results over a period. “Bou-Lluisar, Escrig-Tena, Roca-Puig, and Beltrán-Martín (2005)” examined the relationship between the enabler and result in the EFQM model. On the basis of valid 446 sample responses received from 2695 Spanish companies, they demonstrated a strong relationship between enabler and result criteria. “Bou-Lluisar, Escrig-Tena, Roca-Puig, and Beltrán-Martín (2009)” examined whether enablers have a positive influence on results in the EFQM excellence model and found that enablers have a strong positive influence on results.

Lasrado and Uzbek (2017) highlighted the key practices of award-winning organizations in UAE for the Dubai Quality Award. The award-winning organizations between 2010 and 2014 placed considerable emphasis on their mission, value, and key result areas. The results suggested that leadership plays a key role in generating positive effects on results. This is in line with the findings of a previous study (Moon et al., 2011). Calvo-Mora, Blanco-Oliver, Roldán, and Periañez-Cristóbal (2020) observed an explanatory effect of soft EFQM factors (leadership and people) on strategic hard EFQM factors (strategy, partnership, products, and services). This finding indicates that leadership and people (soft factors) play a catalyzing role within the management system.

2.5 Impact of Business Excellence Adoption

Jankalová and Jankal (2020) explored the relationship between business excellence and sustainability. They indicated that relying exclusively on financial parameters to measure, monitor, and sustain an

organization's success is impossible. Up to 75% of a company's value can no longer be measured using standard accounting techniques. Business excellence allows organizations to assess their competitive strengths, understand and manage their performance, develop, and implement strategic plans, and find opportunities to learn.

Organizations are increasingly adopting business excellence initiatives to obtain breakthrough business results. However, such initiatives have resulted in limited success (Mishra, N., & Rane, S. B., 2019). The study using logistic regression and artificial neural network (ANN)-based business excellence initiative success prediction model indicated that the success rate of organizations deploying the business excellence model was significantly higher than that of those not deploying it and improved the operating (EBITA) margin. This is due to the focus of business excellence initiatives in production or operational areas for bottom-line improvements, which was identified as the main goal of business excellence initiatives. Business excellence initiatives do not significantly improve net profit, revenue, and EPS. Organizations may be required to deploy business excellence initiatives in nonproduction areas.

Boulter, Bendell, and Dahlgaard (2013) examined 133 publicly traded award-winning companies of North America, representing diverse sectors, based on the performance of their share prices and observed a relationship between organizational performance and TQM approaches. The results revealed stronger performance in Europe despite marked differences in company structures and environments between North America and Europe. TQM-oriented award-winning companies achieved stronger performance. Safari et al. (2020) analyzed the data of 112 companies by performing a canonical correlation analysis and observed a weak relationship between financial performance and receiving quality awards. Logistic regression analysis did indicate the impact of financial performance measures on achieving Iran's national quality awards. Conceptually, the deployment of excellence models would not result in favorable outcomes, especially in the financial context. Link and Scott (2011) studied the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program by using a counterfactual evaluation method and arrived at a benefit-to-cost ratio of 820: 1 by using only the benefits for the

surveyed group of applicants for the National Quality Award in 2006 but using all the social costs of the Baldrige Program. The findings indicated that the Baldrige Program is considered valuable for the US economy. Lasrado and Pereira (2018) examined the impact of business excellence in the UAE context and reported that although business excellence does not guarantee definite success, it enables the growth of an organization. Successful implementation of a BEF results in higher goodwill and a more positive image for the organization that benefits all stakeholders, both inside and outside.

Mann (2011) examined the impact of business excellence/quality awards on enterprises and determined that business excellence helps organizations address various problems, including those related to supply chain, growth, governance, and continuous improvement. The framework also helps in aligning strategic and improvement initiatives. Saad (2019) observed that only 7 out of 26 award custodians measured the impact of business excellence in their country. This is a major gap considering that BEFs are treated as transformational initiatives with higher impact.

2.6 Barriers to Business Excellence Adoption

“Dahlgard, Chen, Jang, Banegas, and Dahlgard-Park (2013)” determined that the study on the implementation of TQM and Business Excellence Models programs identified various barriers that may explain the variation or inconsistencies, including the lack of top management commitment, comprehensive quality improvement education, resources, and staff involvement; fear of change; and work overload (Corbett & Angell, 2011). In addition, how users perceived and understood the BEFs are also a barrier to adopting such models (Dahlgard-Park, 2008). The poor performance of some of the MBNQA winners have led to questions in the minds of some people on the value of such awards.

In the context of Canadian organizations, Boys, Wilcock, Karapetrovic, and Aung (2005) highlighted the need for a simplified version of the BEF for SMEs because the current BEF appears to be too intensive or intimidating. Moreover, the study identified cost and staff resistance as the top barriers to implementing BEFs. Sternad, Krenn, and Schmid (2019) observed that the major barriers for SMEs to

adopt business excellence practices include people's attitudes and resource constraints. Although the “*Malcolm Baldrige Award*” has a category for “small businesses”, the framework has not been customized to the SME context. Suárez, Calvo-Mora, Roldán, and Perriñez-Cristóbal (2017) reviewed 55 studies spanning 18 countries and suggested that SMEs may be calibrated differently for quality management. Due to the limitation of SMEs in having a quality management professional, quality is yet another role the SME owners hold. Thus, even if there is an intention, the SMEs become passive in pursuing quality management techniques. Murphy (2016) indicated that SMEs may need to be calibrated differently and aligned to their resources. Moreover, although quality management is considered to be universally applicable, factors such as country, leadership skills, culture, and government affect. More research in this area is warranted.

Brown (2013) determined that leadership support, drive, and consistency in strategy communication are the primary challenges. Focusing on these areas can provide benefits throughout the organization. Dahlgard-Park, Chen, Jang, and Dahlgard (2013) mentioned that BEMs are inspired by Japanese practices and recognized the importance of the soft dimension of organizational realities. However, organizations ignore these aspects while implementing the model.

3.0 Discussion

Most of these studies have focused on the BEF design and its adequacy (38%) or the relationship between criteria (28%), generally classified as enablers (practices) and results (performance). Few empirical studies (only 13%) have examined the effectiveness of the adoption of BEFs. Majority of these studies were conducted in countries or geographies including Europe, Spain, Australia, and UAE. A few studies have examined the performance of US organizations. Even after three decades of the adoption of BEFs in India, only a few studies have been conducted in the Indian context. These studies have mainly focused on the framework design or relationship between practices and results or assessment scores (Dutta S K, 2007, Jayaraman R, 2013; Bandyopadhyay, P. K., & Nair, S., 2015). Most of these studies were conducted before 2010 (e.g., Dutta SK, 2007;

Talwar, 2011; Kanji, 1998, etc). Considering the many disruptive changes that occurred in the past decade, the findings of those studies may have less relevance currently. Many studies suggested a need to examine the effectiveness of the adoption of BEFs and its organizational impact beyond the assessment score or financial performance. Many global studies were recommended to perform further study at the country level because culture, governance, and context can highly influence the effectiveness of business excellence adoption and its impact.

Competitiveness has become the core of business sustainability. Globally, business excellence frameworks are developed to improve the competitiveness of organizations. However, most of these BEFs are primarily promoted through a national-level award program. Whether these models are used as an award model or for organizational transformations remains unclear. With most studies focusing on the relationship between its internal criteria, primarily categorized as enablers (practices) and results, whether these impact organizational performance holistically and positively remains undetermined. Many organizations failed to sustain their focus after years of practice, and a few of them have even completely moved away from this initiative. Thus, it remains unclear whether they discontinued the practice of business excellence because they felt that its benefits had saturated or because they lost trust in it as an effective tool of transformation. An investigation into the reasons for this phenomenon can help offer some clarity on BEF to the future generations of industry leaders. This will also answer another question of whether the adoption of these frameworks is used as a destination or as a journey. Furthermore, whether these BEFs are truly enabling organizations for better performance or whether it is driven as an award model than a transformational model needs to be determined.

The conceptual model developed based on the results of this study indicates two generic streams of adoption of BEFs by organizations: the adoption triggered by participation in a national-level award program aiming for recognitions, and the adoption triggered by the organization's quest for excellence. The key steps and relationship between framework adoption and key organizational metrics are indicated in the model. Finally, the conceptual model indicates how

the impact may vary in general through two streams; as the motivation of the adoption in these streams is different. This information will be of high value to current model designers, award administrators, and future researchers in the business excellence area.

4.0 Conceptual model for the adoption of business excellence by organizations

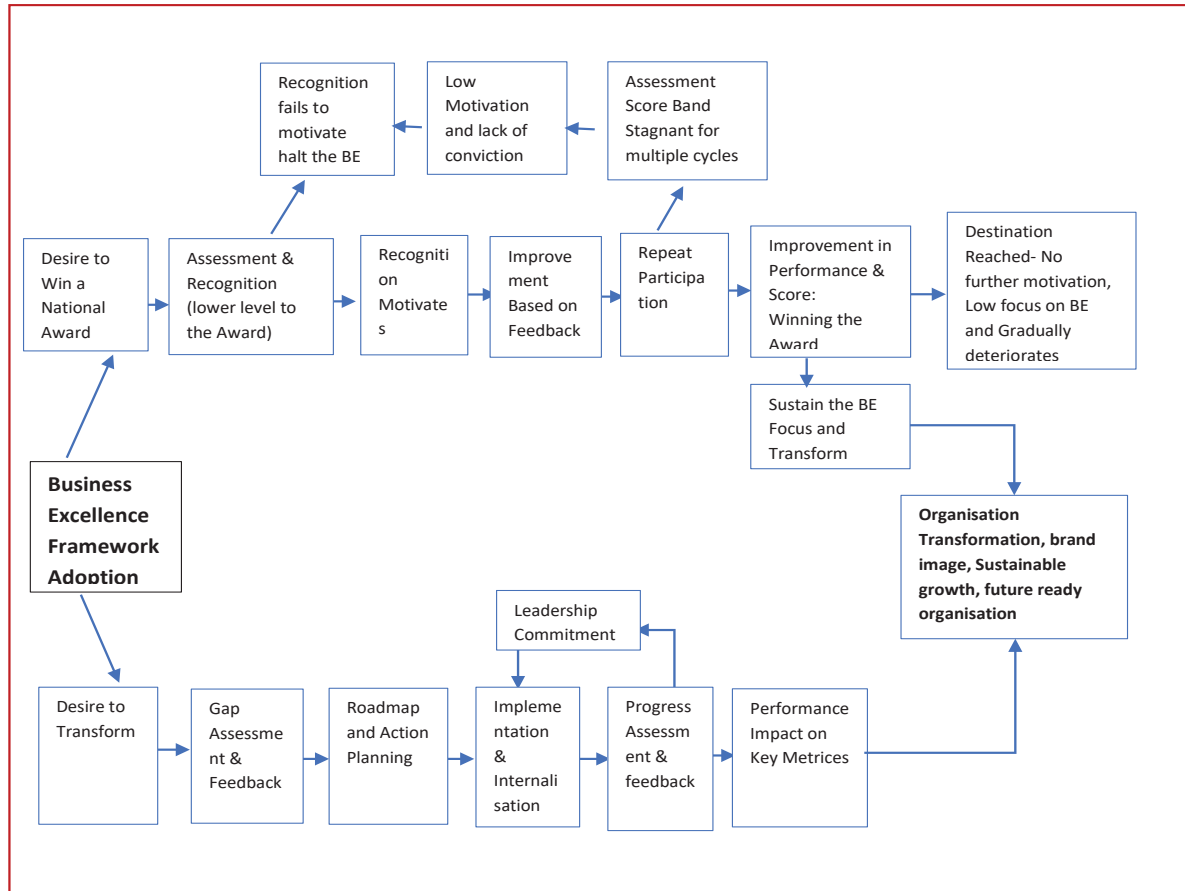
On the basis of the several aspects studied in this paper, a conceptual model has been developed indicating the stages of business excellence adoption and its impact. The desire to adopt BEFs by an organization can be for participating in national award programs or organizational transformation. The focus of organizations aiming to compete for the award is primarily on demonstrating the requirements of the framework and improving the score profile. After the award assessment and recognition, the feedback is analyzed and acted upon to improve the score in the subsequent assessment. The business excellence journey is pursued with an award as the destination and not as a continuous journey. If the recognition from the first participation or at any further stages are not motivating or not as per the expectations, these organizations may withdraw from the program, leading to a reduced rigor and focus on business excellence initiatives. After a few cycles, if the improvement is not noted in the score profile, which is primarily attributed to the lack of actions, focus, and leadership commitment, the organization loses its motivation, thus reducing the focus on business excellence over time. In many of such cases, organizations embark on new initiatives, hoping for recognition.

Alternatively, organizations adopt a BEF for transformation, and after the gap assessment, organizations prepare a detailed action plan and roadmap. The progress measures are defined, and progress assessments are performed at a regular frequency. Leadership commitment and involvement are key drivers in such organizations with a sense of purpose, driving these initiatives. The success is measured by the improvement in key metrics and overall organizational transformation, sustainable growth, brand image, and future-readiness

Figure 2- Conceptual model for the adoption of business excellence by organizations

Source: Author's conceptual design

Conceptual model for the adoption of business excellence



5.0 Conclusion

BEFs are primarily designed and developed for improving the competitiveness of the industry of respective countries. These are promoted through a national-level award program, such as the “Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award” in the United States, the “EFQM” in Europe, and “the CII EXIM Bank Award for Business Excellence” in India. Because the award or recognition is the primary motivation to participate in these programs, most organizations adopt BEF aligned to the requirements of the framework and focus on actions to improve the score in every assessment to receive higher recognition. Although the concept of excellence is a journey, many participants in the award program may consider it as a destination. Apart from the various levels of recognition and associated scores, few studies have explored the impact of the adoption of these frameworks on organizational excellence. The generic nature projected by these frameworks makes them less acceptable to different sectors because they think that most of the generic concepts do not apply to their sector, due to the uniqueness everyone attaches to their sector. This study indicates the need for a comprehensive study to understand the effect of BEF on organizational performance in a quantifiable manner other than the maturity score.

The conceptual framework developed as part of this study will aid future research in this area to relate various approaches and success drivers and will be of high value to model designers and national-level award administrators to review and modify their promotional programs.

6.0 Future Research Recommendations

Many studies have indicated the effect of culture on the success of BEF adoption, which could be an area for further research. Moreover, studies may focus on the drivers of success, because the success rate hugely varies among the organizations of the same country and size. Many organizations discontinued the BEF adoption process or participation in the award program after a few cycles because they did not experience considerable progress. Future studies should identify factors due to which organizations opt out of the award participation and the BEF adoption process.

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Annexure 1

The “Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award” was created by Public Law 100-107, signed into law on August 20, 1987 (Source : NIST website, <https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/malcolm-baldrige-national-quality-improvement-act-1987>) is considered to be the first formal Business Excellence Program.

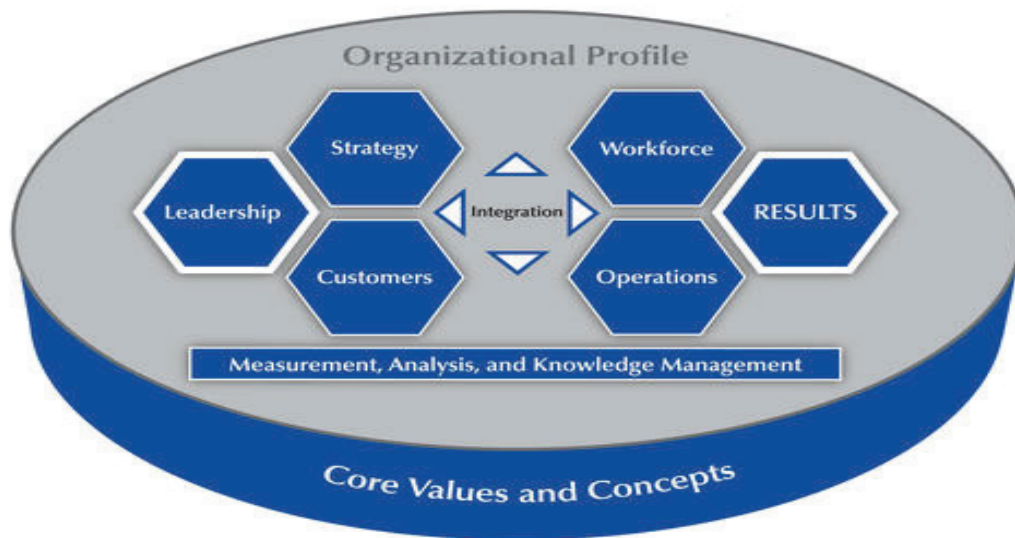


Figure 3 : Baldrige Excellence Framework (Business/Nonprofit) :2021–2022 edition

Image Source : NIST website www.nist.gov/baldrige/publications/baldrige-excellence-framework/businessnonprofit

The goal of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Improvement Act of 1987 was to enhance the competitiveness of U.S. businesses. Its scope has since been expanded to health care and education organizations (in 1999) and to nonprofit /government organizations (in 2007).

- Congress created the Award Program to
 - identify and recognize role-model businesses
 - establish criteria for evaluating improvement efforts
 - disseminate and share best practices

The “European Foundation for Quality Management, EFQM”, was founded in October 1989 when the CEO/ Presidents of 67 European companies subscribed to a Policy Document and declared their commitment to achieving EFQM mission and vision. The Foundation set up a team of experts, from industry and academia, to develop the EFQM Excellence Model, a holistic framework which can be applied to any Organization. This was first used to support the assessment of organizations in the European Quality Award in 1992 (Source-EFQM.org website :<https://efqm.org/about>)



Figure 4 : The EFQM Model (EFQM 2020)

Source : EFQM Website(efqm.org)- Free Download -Short version, English <https://mailchi.mp/7703bd3f60fd/qgru7x5leq>

The EFQM Excellence Award is a transnational quality award that recognises European businesses with "excellent and sustainable results" across all areas of the EFQM Excellence Model. It was established in October 1991 as the European Quality Award by the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM).