

The Pursuance of Institutional Excellence between the Positivist and Islamic Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

The present research paper aims to explore institutional excellence from two perspectives; positivist and Islamic, in addition to highlighting the extent to which Islam contains principles of excellence, as they are not really new to Muslims. Furthermore, institutional excellence has led to the provision of the highest level of good life by the standards of our time, the Almighty said: (Whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, and is a believer, I will grant him a good life).

The study concluded that there are common points between the two perspectives, and although their terms differ in nomenclature, they refer to almost the same concept, and from that we mention the following:

(the positive term / the Islamic term): (quality / mastery of work or perfection) (Values and Principles / Noble Ethics), (Culture of Administrative Consultation / Principle of Shura), (Accomplishing the Right Works in the Right Way / Being Wisdom), (Teamwork in a Team Spirit / Cooperation on Charity), (The Function of Control / Responsibility for the Congregation), (Assigning jobs to people with competencies/ the best choice is the strongest and honest people), (time management/ respect for time and deadline). On this basis, there are numerous terminologies in this topic and they represent the principles of institutional excellence, any institution that seeks excellence should adhere to them.

1. Introduction

The problem of institutional excellence is considered as one of the most important topics in business administration and it is a matter of concern to institutions of all kinds. This made it the main topic of many books, researchers disagree on how to achieve it. However, this method focuses on one of the topics related to stakeholders, especially workers and customers. As for the Islamic point of view, access to institutional excellence is achieved by adopting principles that are broader or more comprehensive than the positive principles of institutional excellence. For example, in the issue of employing the worker, we find the positive principle: assigning jobs to people with competencies, while the Islamic principle says: the best choice is the strongest and honest one, i.e. in addition to efficiency there is the honesty, which is of course the more comprehensive and suitable principle; in reality, many institutions have hired the most qualified person, but then suffered due to this person's dishonesty (thief, waster,...).

On this basis, we attempted in this study to link the two topics of institutional excellence from a positive perspective and institutional excellence from an Islamic perspective, which imposes the following question: **What are the most important common points of institutional excellence between the positive and Islamic perspectives?**

On this basis, the present research is important due to the value and vitality of the topic of institutional excellence, especially from the Islamic point of view.

Following that, the present study aims to:

- Adding to the literature related to the topic of Islamic management.

- exploring the topic from a different stance, which is institutional excellence from the Islamic perspective.
- Identifying the similarities and differences of institutional excellence between the positivist and Islamic perspectives.

2. The First Axis: Institutional Excellence from a Positive Perspective

In this part of the study, the researcher will attempt to take a preliminary look at the issue of institutional excellence in terms of status, by addressing its concept, areas and requirements for achieving it, in addition to the procedures for its method and the obstacles it faces.

2.1. The concept of institutional excellence

The word excellence is defined in the intermediate dictionary as unique which means a distinguished thing, and the excellence of a thing, i.e. its virtue seemed to be superior to its like, and the distinction of a thing being, in other words, distinguished from others. In addition to that, excellence is to be the best among the rest, and achieving excellence requires an in-depth evaluation of words and actions, and a mobilisation of resources that help achieve excellence. Moreover, the basis of excellence is the clarity of the strategy and the extent of the impact of the culture of the institution. Work excellence has also been defined as a method of work whose results are balanced between the satisfaction of stakeholders (customers, employees, community and stockholders) and the increase in the possibility of long-term success of the work.

Excellence is a state of “managerial creativity and organisational excellence that aims to achieve extraordinary levels of implementation in the organisation, resulting in results and achievements that exceed previous levels of achievement, and rise to the satisfaction of the recipient of the product or service” (Jamal, 2017, pp. 24-26)

The concept of excellence for the individual refers to his/her ability to achieve unprecedented results that outperform others, and to avoid, as much as possible, exposure to error, or deviation by relying on clarity of vision, setting goals, proper planning, proper implementation, and continuous evaluation. Of course, “commitment to this concept will lead to the success of the individual, whether in his work or in his life, and there are those who see excellence as stemming from the completion of the right items in the right way, while there are those who summarise the concept of excellence in two words: discipline and mastery” (Abu Al-Nasr, 2009, p. 67).

Excellence can also be defined through the following two elements: (Abu Al-Nasr, 2009, p. 67)

1. The ability of the individual or group to perform the tasks required of them with perfection and quality.
2. The ability of the individual or group to achieve the objectives required of them efficiently and effectively.

On the same line of thought, some researchers view excellence as: Every act or activity issued by the individual enhances and strengthens achievement within the organisation, and excellence refers to two pivotal dimensions in modern management. The first dimension is that the real management goal is the pursuit of excellence in the sense of achieving unprecedented results that excel ; “the second dimension is that all the actions and decisions issued by the administration and the systems and activities it adopts must be distinguished, that is, the complete superior quality that leaves no room for error or deviation and creates real opportunities for Execution of the right actions is achieved correctly and completely” (Nabil, 2019, p13)

2.2. Areas of institutional excellence

There are numerous areas of institutional excellence; however, the researcher will only mention some of them: (Kafi, 2014, p. 134)

- Product quality.
- After-sales services.
- Development and renewal of operations.
- Channels of distribution.
- Response speed (time management).
- Appropriate organisational structure.
- The added value of the products.
- Outstanding customer service.

2.3. Requirements for achieving institutional excellence

Amongst the requirements needed to achieve institutional excellence, we mention: (Kafi, 2014, p. 134)

- Effective and efficient management of the organisation's basic and supportive operations.

- The organisation's ability to support and change these processes and products according to the constantly changing future requirements, and in accordance with the organisation's strategy.
- The institutional excellence of any institution stems from the excellence in the knowledge it possesses, as it is the focus of competitive business, so the presence of creativity and innovation in the institution makes it creative and distinct from other institutions, as the "European Foundation for Quality Management" defines excellence as the best practises in the management of the institution, And distinguished institutions are those that seek to satisfy stakeholders through what they accomplish, and how they accomplish it, in addition to the level of confidence that the results will be sustainable in the future.

While there are those who believe that the requirements for achieving institutional excellence are to eliminate waste in various operations, including: (Al-Najjar, 2014, pp. 143-144)

- Avoid overproduction i.e. off-plan.
- Avoid waiting for customers.
- Loss of transportation, i.e. while delivering the item to customers.
- Out of stock.
- Wastage of water use.
- Missing errors.

2.4. Procedures for the Institutional Excellence Method

The procedures of the institutional excellence method can be mentioned as follows: (Turner, 2007, p. 61)

- Set a vision for the organisation which is a statement of what you want it to be, and it should be simple, clear and meaningful.
- Determine the values and principles, and it is important that all members of the organisation be convinced of them.
- Develop a business strategy that supports the achievement of the organisation's vision.
- Draw a clear mission that includes the purpose and scope of the organisation i.e. what should be done.

On the same token, there are researchers who believe that the procedures for the institutional excellence method are as follows: (Jamal, 2017, pp. 198-200)

- To strive for excellence and superiority (competitive advantage) by adopting more effective competitive strategies.
- It absorbs modern technologies and invests its energies.
- It seeks to satisfy the customer and win his affection.
- It selects markets carefully.
- Seeks change and looks forward to the future.
- Working on developing creativity and innovation.
- It believes in investing in intellectual capital, including assigning jobs to highly qualified people.
- Characterised by kinetics and dynamism, flexibility and speed of adaptation.
- It uses technology to the maximum and follows a decentralised pattern.
- It uses the logic of flexible work teams and groups (teamwork in the spirit of teamwork) and provides opportunities for the effective participation of human resources (particularly strengthening the culture of management consulting).
- To make the organisation alert and vigilant (competitive vigilance) and able to rapidly shift resources according to circumstances (flexibility).

2.5. Obstacles to achieving institutional excellence

Like any other field, institutional excellence faces many obstacles that can be mentioned as follows: (Al-Najjar, 2014, pg. 48)

- Inability to set goals.
- Lack of ability to solve problems.
- Inability to be creative.
- Lack of ability to lead others.
- Difficulty motivating employees.
- Difficulty supervising work (weak control function).
- Inability to train others.

While there are those who believe that the obstacles to achieving institutional excellence are as follows: (Al-Meligy, 2012, pp. 108-109)

- Weakness of the financial resources of the institution.
- The senior management is not satisfied with the management of excellence.
- Lack of clarity about the responsibilities related to the Excellence Department.
- The lack of a suitable information system that helps in practising the management of excellence.
- Lack of awareness, and managers' acceptance of the true status of the institution, and the tendency of some managers that the institution's status is good, then they stick to these wrong impressions, and with time they become unchangeable.
- The preoccupation of managers and the management of institutions in the conduct of the daily affairs of the institution.
- The spread of a culture of resistance, where workers seek to resist any attempt to bring about change or renewal within the institution.
- Weak interest in research and development.
- Not rewarding working individuals for their work in a good way or not rewarding them in a way that fits their work with the strategy of the institution.
- Weakness of the information system of the institution.
- The small number of manpower needed to complete the plan with the efficiency required to implement the Excellence Department.
- Management instability and its permanent change, meaning the succession of managers in the same institution, which negatively affects the opportunity for them to focus on excellence.

3. The Second Axis: Institutional Excellence from the Islamic Perspective

After dealing with institutional excellence from a positive perspective, the researcher will address this issue from an Islamic perspective as follows: (Al-Meligy, 2012, pp. 63-66)

3.1. A Brief History

As a matter of fact, institutional excellence is not just the result of Western and Japanese thought, but also Islam which had established the rules and principles of institutional excellence in business performance when it emphasized that it is considered an approach and a way of life demanded by the Muslim individual until death, and this has appeared in several places in the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. For example, the Almighty says: (Indeed, we do not waste the reward of one who does a good deed) (Surat Al-Kahf, verse 30), and the confirmation of this came through the saying of Allah: 195), and the saying of the prophet Muhammad PBUH: "God has decreed kindness for everything." Hence, Islam was a forerunner in urging people to work with quality; he also urged people to perfect the work and said: "God loves if one of you does a job that he masters it." Proficiency here requires a person to perform his work to the fullest extent, and to strive to reach the stage of human perfection, so that he performs the work with all its details without Shortcoming, negligence, cheating or deception, and this calls for complete sincerity in the matter of work.

3.2. Signs and meanings

It is well established that institutional excellence in Islam has taken on several connotations and meanings:

- Proficiency in work:

It means improving work in a way that reaches the level of conformity with the specifications that raise the level of work in a creative way. Islam urges the perfection of work, the necessity of achieving quality and institutional excellence in it, free of defects, striving for permanent improvement, and the need for the worker to love his work. And complete sincerity is concluded in it, and the basis for perfection in actions in Islam is the availability of knowledge first, and the evidence for that is the saying of God Almighty: (And do not stand for that of which you have no knowledge) (Surat Al-Isra, verse: 36), and knowledge without action is not worth anything, the Almighty said: (And say work, then God will see your work and His Messenger and the believers) (Surat Al-Tawbah, verse: 105).

- Sincerity in work: Islam affirms that the Muslim is not satisfied with performing the work only, but rather he tries to make this work righteous and good.
- Competition: since competition in the performance of work between individuals leads to the quality of work, as each individual tries to show what he has of his skills and abilities, and this was clear in the Almighty's saying:

- Completion and fulfilment: where they mean the completion of the work well, the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, said: “I was sent to perfect the morals.”

3.3. Principles:

Islam also pays attention to institutional excellence by inculcating the following principles:

- The principle of shura: where Islam called for adherence to the principle of shura through consulting with individuals in making decisions and solving problems, and this appears through the Almighty's saying: (And consult them in the matter) (Surat Al Imran, verse: 159), and in the Almighty's saying: (And their affair is consultation among themselves) (Surat Al-Shura: verse: 38), so consultation leads to an elaborate and quality work.
- The principle of knowledge: since the Noble Qur'an was revealed with its verses to Muslims, it emphasises the necessity and importance of knowledge in the lives of Muslims, as the Almighty says: (God raises those among you who have believed and those who have been given knowledge by degrees) (verse 11), as well as Al-Mujadala. The noble hadith emphasised this principle: “Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave.” The widespread importance and necessity of science in the lives of individuals is one of the requirements for achieving institutional excellence.
- The principle of wisdom: It is the knowledge of the facts of things as they are, and acting according to them, as in the Allah's saying: (He gives wisdom to whom He wills, and he who is given wisdom has been given a greater good than Al-Baqarah: 26) It includes knowing the truth and acting upon it, and being correct in word and deed.
- The principle of cooperation: Islam has emphasized the necessity of cooperation in the cause of goodness, and this is demonstrated by the Almighty's saying: To manage organizational excellence.
[Islam also urges mixing with the group and not leaving it, and making the one who mixes with people and is patient with their annoyance is better than the one who does not mix with people and is not patient with their annoyance. Islam legislated acts of worship with a collective appearance, such as congregational prayer in the mosque and the pilgrimage. Islam also urges intimacy and cooperation between people, as in the hadith "The believers in their mutual love and compassion are like that of a single body". Allah, the Most High, said: (And do not be like those who became divided and differed after the clear proofs came to them) (surat Al Amrane, verse 105). (Al-Maghribi, 2018, p. 199)]
- The principle of monitoring: whether it is external or subjective, it leads to ensuring the implementation of the goals and standards set in accordance with the standards and controls of Islamic law, and the self-monitoring of the Muslim has full responsibility towards his actions in this world and the hereafter.) (Surat Al-Muddathir, verse: 38) And in the noble hadith: (All of you are shepherds, and each of you is responsible for his flock).

The following principles can also be added: (Hayat, March 2016, pp. 164-166)

- The principle of specialisation and division of labour: The division of labour is considered one of the most important values that lead to increased production and productivity, and this led to the emergence of positive results for this value, which was emphasised by the founder of economics, Ibn Khaldun. God Almighty is a mechanism to disassemble the life of humans. of what they gather) (Surat Az-Zukhruf, verse 32) and it is clear from this verse that difference and variance are part of human nature and is the spirit of the principle of specialisation and division of labour, each according to his ability, ability and experience, just as the administrative approach divides individuals into degrees, each degree being subject to the other and it is linked to what they instilled upon. Strength and weakness, acumen and intelligence, knowledge and ignorance, indolence and lethargy, and so on are human natures.
- The principle of work is the basis for administrative promotion: Promotion to different levels is one of the management's values, and it is a divine instinct and human nature, “He raised some of you above others by degrees” (Surat Al-An'am, verse: 165), but these degrees must be ascended to them. The result of work, and work alone is the criterion by which ranks can be graded, because reaching distinct degrees away from the work scale such as favouritism, prestige and lineage leads to obstruction of institutional excellence and makes what is achieved from it vulnerable to annihilation, and this is in accordance with the Almighty's saying: (And that man has nothing but what he strives for) Surat An-Najm, Verse 39).
- The principle of knowledge is the basis for differentiation in levels: If work is the criterion for reaching any level, then the basis of differentiation among employees is knowledge, and knowledge was, is, and will remain the basis for elevation and comparison. People gain it and differ from it, so it becomes their motive for creativity and invention, and this is what makes its impact profound. The Almighty says: (We raise the ranks of those We willed, and above all who have all-knowing knowledge) (Surat Yusuf, verse 76).
- The principle of wages according to the amount of work done: the wage should vary from one worker to another according to the nature of the work performed. On the other hand, things turned against it and this negatively affected human performance. Therefore, developing this value and keenness to apply it has a great importance in the field of management in particular, and in human life in general.

- The principle of moral remuneration: Every responsible official must take care of the value of the moral remuneration, and this moral value is what shows the benefactor the quality work and encourages him/her to increase creativity and shows the ones doing the work in the wrong way and discipline him/her in order to make him/her do the right thing and encourage him/her to give up the bad work, and this is one of the biggest motives for achieving institutional excellence.

In addition to the aforementioned principles, there are other ones such as respecting time and deadlines, as well as the best choice for employees is the strongest and honest person, which means that s/he has an excellent ability to carry out his work efficiently and is characterised by honesty, in the following verse these two terms: "O my father, hire him. Indeed, the best one you can hire is the strong and the trustworthy."; in addition, the Prophet may God's prayers and peace be upon him, refused Abu Dhar Al-Ghafari's request and said to him: (O Abu Dharr, you are weak and it is a trust), and in this there are many places in Islamic law that speak of combining strength and trust.

4. Conclusion

The present research paper concluded some results that have been achieved in the positive perspective of institutional excellence, we mention the following:

1- Institutional excellence is the organization's access to results up to satisfy the consumer of the product or service, and by which the organization will be better than others.

2- Some of the areas of institutional excellence are: quality, organization operations and their development, time management, added value to products, and customer service.

3- In the institutional excellence procedures we find for example: setting a vision for the institution, developing a work strategy, striving for excellence and excellence always, striving to satisfy the customer and gaining his affection, working on the development of innovation, focusing on investing in intellectual capital, using technology.

4- in the obstacles to achieve institutional excellence, we find: failure to set goals, failure to solve problems, absence of creativity, absence of appropriate leadership, lack of motivation and training of workers, lack of financial resources of the institution, failure to adopt excellence by senior management, failure to stand against culture of resistance.

Among the results that have been achieved in the Islamic perspective of institutional excellence, we mention the following:

1- Islam has established the principles of institutional excellence in the performance of business when it confirmed that it is considered a method and a way of life required by every muslim.

2- Perfecting the work, in the hadith: "God loves if one of you does a job that he masters it." Also, the basis for perfection in work is the availability of knowledge first, as Allah said: (And do not stand that of which you have no knowledge).

3- To behave with good morals. The prophet Muhammad, PBUH said: "I was sent to perfect morals."

4- Commitment to the principle of shura through consultation with specialists, especially in the field of decision-making and problem solving, Allah said: (And their matter is consultation among themselves), so advice leads to better work.

5- Being wise, i.e. knows the how and what, as Allah said: (He gives wisdom to whom He wills, and he who is given wisdom has indeed been given much good).

6- Encouraging cooperation in the cause of good deeds, Allah said: (And cooperate in righteousness and piety, and do not cooperate in sin and aggression), and in the honourable hadith: "who mixes people and is patient about their hurt is better than who don't mix with people and don't be patient about their hurt", so the collective work with a team spirit is one of the fundamentals of institutional excellence.

7- Commitment to the principle of supervision, in the noble hadith: (All of you are shepherds, and each of you is responsible for his flock).

8- Commitment to respect time and deadlines, as well as the principle of choosing the strongest and honest people.

As a conclusion, the researcher attempted in this research to explore institutional excellence from two perspectives: positive and Islamic. Furthermore, we found several common points between the two perspectives, and although they differ in the nomenclature, they refer to the same meaning, and from that we mention in order (the positive term / the Islamic term): (quality / mastery of work or charity), (Values and Principles / Noble Ethics), (Culture of Administrative Consultation / Principle of Shura), (Accomplishing the Right Works in the Right Way / being wise), (Teamwork in a Team Spirit / Cooperation on Charity), (The Function of Control/ Responsibility for the Congregation), (Assigning jobs to qualified people / the best choice is the strongest and honest people), (time management / respect for time and deadlines).

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