

Elements of the Graphic Designer's Excellence in a Competitive Business Environment: Analytical Study

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Abstract

Original Research Article

The study aims to present the concepts of excellence and reveal various organizational practices that help support and stimulate excellence amongst employees. In order to achieve the goals of this study, the historical analytical approach was adopted and then what was addressed by the product of thought in this field was investigated. The study has mainly resulted in following:

- Excellence is a concept that means achieving a high-performance level and additional value that distinguishes individuals from each other.
- Excellence is an activity that is influenced by a set of practices, behaviors, and various psychological, organizational, environmental, and social factors (internal and external environment).
- Excellence is one of the most important components of the organizational growth, excellence, survival and competitive advantages.
- Excellence is a vital dynamic phenomenon in a life cycle.
- Excellence is an activity that can be achieved under prudent and efficient departments that apply administrative practices and behaviors that support excellence.

Keywords: Excellence, graphic design, competitive business environment.

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INTRODUCTION

Excellence in graphic design plays an active role in the life of public and private business organizations, due to its positive effects on the performance and the acquisition of distinguished organizations with a reputation and prestige among other organizations, especially in the competitive market environment, that is emerging significantly nowadays, as of the rapid changes that have occurred in the world like globalization, openness to the Other, elimination of borders, organizational change and intense competition between companies to seize markets and customers.

These environmental changes posed a real challenge for organizations and their leaders, and imposed a new reality that must be dealt with and adapted, which is achieving excellence in graphic design as a necessary and non-optional requirement, since it is the most efficient way to show the aesthetic of organizations in different forms (image, writing) and give organizations the ability to stay, compete, achieve goals and avoid risks and failures.

Excellence in graphic design maximizes the ability to interact and respond to the requirements and needs of competitive environments, and organizations that are striving to find appropriate platforms and bases for building systems aimed for employing excellence in graphic design activities, as they are one of the main drivers towards achieving the best performance.

Arguably, excellence in the graphic design process has generally received interests on the global level and many countries have adopted policies and strategies to support it such as the United States, Canada, Japan and the European Union. Along with many organizations that have established special departments to support excellence at various levels of its applications in promotional and marketing activities, by enhancing the talents of individuals in design and developing their creative skills and capabilities.

The excellence in the design process is considered one of the most important means for generating ideas and solutions for different problems

and issues, whether they concern the aesthetics or marketing. Design excellence gains its importance and necessity from its association with intellectual, technical and skill-related aspects that the designer must excel at and master, as all these aspects intersect to produce an unusual and creative design job.

Therefore, there must be various support forms for the designer; personal, environmental, organizational and administrative, as well as other requirements and resources such as human, material, financial, technological, and knowledge, among others, in order to reach a distinguished graphic design process.

Problem of the study

The problem of the study emerges from the actual and urgent need for the element of excellence among employees in the graphic design field, as they are the individuals who are involved in drawing pictures and shapes that convey the positive image of the organization and simulate its activities. Especially in light of the various challenges and changes that surround today's organizations such as political, economic, social, environmental, technological, legal, as well as the challenges of market forces, competitors and customers' renewed desires. Whereas, the need for excellence is imposed by all of these challenges, in order to maintain the organizations' positive reputation and survival, and enable them to achieve their goals efficiently and effectively. A set of questions emerge from this problem, such as:

1. How was the term of excellence and its synonyms circulated in contemporary management ideology?
2. What does excellence mean for a graphic designer?
3. What are the reasons for focusing on excellence in the design process in graphic design?
4. What are the supporting requirements for achieving graphic designer's excellence?
5. What are the benefits or repercussions for achieving excellence in the graphic design process?

Objectives of the study

The study aims to provide a theoretical conceptual framework for the phenomenon of excellence in terms of the concept, importance and practices supporting the achievement of excellence and its development amongst employees in the graphic design field, as well as reviewing the various scientific trends that were addressed about excellence in previous studies and thought-holders in this field.

Significance of the study

The importance of the study stems from the fact that it deals with one of the most important issues that achieve the competitive advantage and the continuity of development and survival for the

organizations that adopt it. It is also important for organizations in the Arab to know better the nature of excellence and its importance for the organization and administrative practices or strategies that support achieving excellence amongst employees. It will also enrich the Arab library with a study of an important field of humanities, arts and graphic sciences. This study also provides valuable information for students, researchers, and those interested in the field of excellence in the graphic design process.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The methodology used in this research is the analytical and deductive method of the various literatures published in this field, and the results of field studies and previous experiences regarding the study and development of excellence in graphic design [1, 2].

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Concept of Excellence

There are many differed definitions and opinions on excellence due to the difference in philosophies and views of researchers as well as the different goals of their studies and the locations of implementation. Researchers also believe that the existence of many synonyms that were used with excellence, like creativity, innovation, distinction, originality, and others, played an influential role in mixing concepts with each other and somehow pushed away writers and researchers from the path of fundamental and accurate research as well as addressing it in depth. Excellence has been defined as the method of working or overall performance that leads to achieving high levels of satisfaction in a balanced manner for all stakeholders and achieving long-term success for the organization [3].

Gitomer [4] has defined excellence as the organization's outperformance over its competitors in the market. Alter [5] has defined excellence as what distinguishes the product of high value in terms of quality and service, and the ability to provide it at a continuously low cost over other competitors.

Al-Sakarneh [6] has somewhat agreed with the definition in terms of that excellence includes a set of characteristics and advantages that distinguish an organization from another, whether in terms of cost, distinction, creativity, alliances or any other characteristic that makes it provide services to its customers in a way that achieves higher satisfaction level to keep their customers and attract new ones. As for Al-Khresha [7] has divided excellence into two types; the first: Excellence on the organizational level, and he defined it as the vitality and viability of organizations to exploit available resources better than their counterparts, and exercise their activities according to the best known standards. Organizations that benefit from the experiences of others and adopt the best fit for them and apply them. Those that works

to analyze information and impart knowledge amongst themselves, work with a one-team spirit, establish transparency, guarantee accountability, and maintain good relations with all parties that they deal with. As for the second type of excellence, comes individual excellence, which is every action or activity of the individual that changes the current state into another one that is more positive and beneficial.

As for Al-Khasawneh, *et al.* [8], they defined excellence as the performance that varies with higher degrees of preference among others who work in the same field, whether they are individuals, groups or institutions. And researchers believe that one of the main reasons that reinforces or supports the variation in performance leads to excellence. It is due to the various aspects that may be attributed to physiological, social, cultural, environmental, administrative or other factors.

As for graphic design, it was defined by Bunweirah [9] as a creative work practiced by a group of individuals such as designers, programmers, directors and others to convey a specific idea through different forms such as pictures, writings, and drawings.

As for Al-Koufahi [10], graphic design is defined as creating beautiful, interesting and useful artistic designs for people in various fields of advertising, public marketing materials, posters and prints, slogans, covers, magazines, books, cards, and illustrations of something specific.

Khasawneh [11] defined it as a creative message in the form of writing, shapes, and fixed or animated drawings of the positive influence on the future behavior to achieve certain goals.

Previous Studies

In this context, the researcher presents some studies that have dealt with the concept of excellence as follows:

Study of Harrington [12] studied the pillars of excellence, which found there are five main pillars: Process management, Project management, Change management, Knowledge management, Resource management. And found that the top management plays a main role in activating the pillars of excellence among the employees.

Study of Pinar & Girard [13] that investigated the impact of leadership strategies and their role in achieving organizational excellence and desired business performance of Turkish firms in the Aegean region. The results showed a significant relationship between organizational excellence and business performance, and between leadership strategies and business performance. Additionally, the leadership strategies played a mediating role in achieving organizational excellence and business performance.

The findings help managers and academics understand which organizational excellence and leadership factors contribute to achieve higher business performance.

Study of Peters & Waterman [14] in which excellence of organizations did not come spontaneously but as a result of the management of their organizations adopting a set of different requirements and administrative practices, namely: using a method of partial towards work, building relationships with customers and getting closer to them, using the autonomy of the organization's structures method, focusing on the human element, the use of flexible and simple organizations, practicing management in the means of reason, logic, wisdom and flexibility instead of distress and violence and to adhere to the organization's original activity.

Study of Kanji [15] on forces of excellence in kanji's Business Excellence model. The study aimed to identify the relationship between performance measurement and business excellence, and it has concluded that achieving outstanding performance for the organization is reflected by providing efficient leadership that depends on the customer's satisfaction and management with goals and human resources management, and the practice of constant improvement approach, the study has shown as well that excellence of organizations is achieved through focusing on organizational values, continuous learning and meeting the needs of stakeholders.

A book under the title of Innovative Leadership and Outstanding Performance written by Abbas [16] has described that excellence cannot be achieved spontaneously without being accompanied by prudent administrative efforts and practices characterized by awareness, enthusiasm, sophistication, insightful vision, the ability to influence others, build confidence amongst employees, the ability to use different incentive methods fairly, and the ability to carry out business through teamwork, work with one-team spirit and the ability to achieve a balance in management between the internal and external environment of the organization.

Study of Smith [17] on the importance of a system in business excellence. The study included more than 75 institutions between colleges, universities, agencies and other institutions. It concluded that all the elements that were addressed in the study are important in supporting excellence, but their importance may vary according to the following sequence in a descending order: developing a strategy for excellence, providing benefits and privileges, guidance towards quality, supporting the organization with external information, self-realization, equal payment of wages, relying on internal information, teamwork, fairness and equal treatment, effective monitoring.

Study of Khali and Waheed [17] on factors that lead organizations to achieve business excellence. The study aimed to identify the main organizational practices that lead to achieving excellence in business organizations in the city of Lahore in Pakistan. The study community was one of the 110 bank managers whose answers were acquired through a questionnaire with a response rate of 73%, and it had found that achieving excellence in the organizations included in the research is related to the availability of motivation for employees towards excellence, the extent of customer satisfaction, the extent of management's ability to achieve job inclusion for employees, adoption of initiatives, the follow-up of an effective performance appraisal and the extent to which managers can use appropriate managerial qualities throughout the organization.

Study of Jain and Gupta [18] on significance of quality certification towards business excellence: Case of India software industry. The study aimed on identifying the role of quality certificates in supporting business excellence in electronic factories in India. The study relied on the experimental method to address the topics covered by the research, and has concluded that quality certificates help in implementing quality management programs based on the principles of total quality management. The study as well has proven that the quality of certificates plays a role affecting performance and helps in achieving work excellence.

Study of Mohamed *et al.* [19] that studied the impact of organizational excellence in terms of principles and practices along with employee performance on organizational productivity. The data was collected from 256 employees of the Health Authority Abu Dhabi (HAAD) and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) via SmartPLS 3.0. There were two main results; first, organizational excellence (excellence principles and excellence practices) have a positive impact on organizational productivity, second, employee performance significantly, predicting organizational productivity. The proposed model explained 64% of the variance in organizational productivity.

Study of Chipwatanga & Kaira [20] that aimed to create an innovative strategic operational excellence framework that will enable, based on defined organizational performance dimensions, to be applied in order to improve and sustain organizational performance. The results of this study provide key information on the relationship between the performance measurement process and organizational performance and uncovers the close relation between operational excellence and innovation both key to strategy development and management.

It is worth to mention, that through reviewing these studies and the available literature in this field,

that there is a number of supportive practices to achieve individual excellence in performance, including:

First: The Requirements and Self-Motivation of Excellence

Those are the internal influences on individuals that affect Conscience, senses, emotions or feelings and direct them to satisfy their needs and desires. Therefore, they are of great importance since they affect each individual to reach a specific performance level according to physiological or psychological factors. This performance is what reflects the levels of individuals' excellence. The motives are very important as they direct or lead the behavior of the individual to reach the desired goal.

There are many researchers who had addressed the motives of excellence amongst individuals, as some believed, based on the results of their studies such as Abraham Maslow, the American psychologist, that the sources of excellence are accrued to self-realization derived from his theory around the motives that were built on the Maslow Hierarchy of Needs as an ascending pyramid in which the physiological needs come first, followed by security and protection, social needs, respect and appreciation, and at last, the need for self-realization that occupied the top of the pyramid.

As for Alderfer, he validated that the motivation for excellence is the need for survival and social relations, and the need for growth, as those are the most important needs that concern each individual which also are supposed to push the individual to perform excellence in order to achieve these needs.

Whereas, McClelland.s considered that the individual's motifs for excellence in his performance are the need for authority and leadership positions, the need of belonging to a group and demonstrating that he is as integral as the others are, as well as the need for achievement and self-assertion in order of showing his excellence and over shine others or bridging a gap or compensation for what he thinks he is missing [21].

It can be said that the relationship between these excellence vocabularies is a close one, as it is considered one of the internal engines that start from within the person himself and end within him. Even if there was a difference in levels or sources.

Second: Organizational Incentives for Excellence

Durra and Al-sabaa' [22] has defined incentives as the external motors or forces that excite and move an individual's motives with the aim of modifying behavior to reach a specific goal. Al-Khasawneh [23] has proved that it is an important element in achieving success, progress, enthusiasm and impulsivity in order to achieve excellence and preference. In addition, the incentives that were applied for the employees during the behavioral school, whether

material or moral, have demonstrated success and distinction in performance which is best evidence of the role of incentives in achieving an outstanding performance.

As for the organizational aspects, those are related to the organizational climate or the internal environment of the organization in terms of supporting the ideas and behaviors of its employees and the use of administrative practices that enhance their self-confidence, development and qualification to lead them to excel in their performance [24].

Some of the organizational incentives that support individual performance excellence as demonstrated by the results of the studies and research papers, including the following [23]:

- Using the method of participation and consultation between the superior-subordinate.
- Development and training of employees and equipping them with new practices and knowledge [25].
- Adopting an organizational culture specific to the organization and its employees.
- Using free and open communication with employees without influences.
- Using the incentive method fairly [26].
- Adopting a consultative, democratic leadership style.
- Using delegation and empowering others.
- Depending on the formation of teams and teamwork.
- Empowering employees and giving them the freedom to act in judgment and decision-making [23, 8].
- Focusing on specialization in the work-place and practicing what individuals excel at.

Likewise, Williams [27] has added other organizational incentives that support excellence such as flexible organizational structures, efficient resources provision and risk support. As for Mughrabi [19], he has added other elements to support excellence, such as systems and institutional laws, clear objectives, labor policies, flexible procedures and others. As for Swan & Birke [13], he has considered feedback, staff monitoring, focus on competencies in selection and exclusion of non-competencies in organizational practices as important elements in supporting excellence in corporate work.

Third: Personal Characteristics of excellence

The administrative knowledge collective owners and psychology researchers have unanimously agreed that distinguished individuals have hereditary traits or characteristics such as intelligence, brilliance, risk-taking, risk-sharing, self-confidence, independence of opinion, initiative, love for competition, disclosure, lack of compliance with others, broad imagination,

analysis of situations in addition to the mind's maturity or health [28].

Fourth: Environmental and Social Effects of Excellence

Environmental and social influences mean the place or ideology where the individual lives and is raised. Which poses a direct impact on him, whether in terms of his birth, upbringing, maturity, and the acquired capacities and capabilities. This environment is represented by family, parents, tribe, friends, school, and places of worship, councils, societies, federations, universities and others. Where each element in this environment is extremely important in building the personality of the individual and designing his being in a way that makes him a person who is confident, educated, honest, well-mannered, trustworthy, feels like he belongs to work and the country, loving work, and therefore, if adopted, such elements would help in personal refinement, self-realization, and behavioral excellence in performance and work, since the product of an individual is often the result of interactions with the environment and society that is affected or may be of effect in various aspects [29].

Some of the steps that lead to performance excellence are

1. Collecting the necessary information.
2. Information analysis.
3. Establishment and formation of the idea.
4. Extracting the idea.
5. Choosing, applying and prioritizing ideas [30].

While Graham Wallace explained in his book, *The Art of Thought*, which he published for the first time in 1926, that the idea itself revolves in the mind of the individual within different stages until it ends with something of value and new addition. These stages are:

1. The preparation stage: the stage in which the individual acquires experience, knowledge and skill in order to be able to demonstrate and perceive the problem.
2. The development stage: the stage that requires a lot of efforts made by the talented individual to solve the problem.
3. The stage of radiance: the stage of the spark or ignition from which divergent ideas that lead to solving the problem are generated.
4. The implementation and review stage: the experimental selection stage for ideas that are distinguished and approved for implementation.

There are some other steps for excellence such as the following

1. The need to solve a specific problem.
2. Collecting information.
3. Thinking about the problem and self-simulation.
4. Developing solutions [23].

5. Experimenting solutions to choose the most appropriate one.
6. Implementing the idea [31].

Note that there is a contrast between the researchers in terms of the elements of the excellence process, but there is a consensus that the essential aim is to find added value on performance in a way that achieves a creative nature in the final output of the production process. Also, that excellence in performance is a product that depends on perfection and interaction between all the system's elements; personal, organizational and environmental. The Most Important Characteristics of Outstanding Individuals

Outstanding individuals have a number of characteristics, including

- Uniqueness and differentiation in doing what is different from other competitors.
- Bringing what is partially or completely new in exchange for the existing, as well as keeping abreast of the renewal of the product provided to customers in the best way [32].
- To be the first applicant in the implementation of a certain aspect: that is, the first initiator in providing what is distinct from others and obtaining the first rank in reaching the market and gaining reputation and knowledge amongst the public [33].
- Reliance on self-management in developing the knowledge, capabilities, and behavior of employees in a manner that guarantees them the best performance.
- The ability to achieve a good fit between the designer's inclinations and the needs and desires of customers to achieve the mutual benefit for both.
- The ability to take risks and contain the crises and difficulties faced by the outstanding person [34].
- The ability to gain long-term customer satisfaction and loyalty to the organization.
- Possessing experience and knowledge in theory and being able to translate it into practice.
- Entrepreneurship, owning entrepreneurial power, striving to seize new opportunities and bypassing familiar and routine or traditional workflow.
- The ability to take on social responsibility and interact with the community, and to have the power of balance in affecting and being affected by the surrounding community [15].

Factors Affecting Excellence in Graphic Design

There are various factors that affect the graphic design process, such as:

- The designer should possess managerial skills such as planning, organizing, coordinating,

following up, feedback, and the ability to make decisions in choosing the best design and developing ideas continuously.

- The designer should possess intellectual skills such as intelligence, intuition, insights, analysis, reflection, deep sense, understanding the needs and desires of customers as well as market demands [35].
- The design process should be based on clear, purposeful, obvious ideas to solve a problem or develop an existing activity, and the ability to demonstrate the main idea [36].
- The designer and design employees should be talented and creatively outstanding [17].
- The interest in design should be in line with the organization's strategies, and supported by the higher management in the organization [37].
- Taking the technical aspects that add aesthetic to the design outputs into account in the design process such as decoration, colors, movements, and rhythm that attracts attention and consideration, and affect perception [38].
- To create an environment that is suitable for the designer in terms of psychological comfort such as place, hygiene, time, peace, independence, and others [36].
- Supporting the design process with the necessary and essential resources and supplies such as financial, material, and technological resources (software, applications), knowledge and information, etc. [39].

The Importance of Excellence in Graphic Design

Excellence in graphic design leads to many benefits of which the most significant are:

- Adding aesthetic value to the product.
- Achieving psychological comfort for the consumers of the product.
- Attracting new customers through effective teasers [40].
- Adding qualitative value to the designed product, which leads to achieving a competitive advantage for the product over other products in terms of popularity, spread, increase in sales volume, and increasing the level of loyalty to the product [41].
- Abbreviating written descriptive and long descriptive phrases to fewer phrases in the form of words, pictures, shapes and maps. It contributes to improving the level of marketing and product promotion, and influencing consumer behavior [42].

CONCLUSION

What has been achieved after reviewing the literature related to the subject of the study can be presented as follows:

1. Excellence is a concept that means achieving high level of performance and achieving an additional value that distinguishes individuals from one another.
2. Excellence is an activity affected by a set of practices, behaviors, and various psychological, organizational, environmental, and social factors (internal and external environment).
3. Excellence is one of the most important components of an organization's growth, distinction, survival and competitive advantage.
4. Excellence is a vital dynamic phenomenon that has become a prerequisite for developing the life cycle of organizations and products.
5. Excellence is an activity that can be achieved in light of personal will of the graphic designer that provides a supportive environment for excellence (organizational, family).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher's findings may be summarized as follows:

1. The necessity for the organizations' departments to believe in this vital activity, use planning, devise the necessary strategies and requirements and provide the appropriate organizational climate to support excellence in the competitive environment.
2. The organizations' departments should adopt the systemic approach to excellence and focus on the variables of the system elements of inputs, processes and outputs in a balanced and elaborate way to reach excellence in output and performance.
3. The organization's departments are concerned with studying cases of the gifted individuals on their workforce in terms of their personal, family, social, environmental, economic and other external environmental factors, to ensure that they are all supporting excellence and not the other way around, so that the organization's departments can handle or correct as possible the negative conditions that surround the gifted individuals coming from the external environment, especially for individuals with competence and ambition who show the characteristics of excellence in performance.
4. Providing talented graphic designers with the resources that enable them to implement their fictional ideas and make them reality, such as financial resources, technological and technical requirements and the appropriate environment.
5. Business organizations should adopt excellence as an organizational culture in their different strategies and systems.
6. Conducting more field and analytical studies on excellence and at the individual, collective and institutional level.

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