Business Excellence Practices in Brunei Darussalam Halal Industry

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ABSTRACT: *Over the past decades, the pursuit of business life has developed to excel in every aspect to gain competitive advantage. Since its inception, Business Excellence (BE) has assisted organizations to manage and review seven dimensions, which are leadership, planning, information, customer, people, process and results, all of which relate to sustainability. In addition, many organizations benchmark themselves against similar organizations to compare these seven dimensions. They are able to accelerate the process of change because they can refer to models from other organizations in guiding their changes. It is important to identify the best practices and industrial capabilities of halal products to penetrate the global halal market. Indeed, the halal industry in Brunei Darussalam is still worth to be examine at this point. This paper highlight the effect of using BE to help organizations to identify more opportunities and manage changes, which include training and educating existing employees. The research finds that the halal industries of Brunei Darussalam practice BE has a positive and significant effect on competitive advantages. The competitive advantages of the industries of Brunei Darussalam come from the proper utilization of 'information' and 'people'. Through the seven key measures, BE could potentially create greater benefit and impact. The challenges are to increase the businesses' capacity with significant collaboration between agencies, industries, and universities in both countries.*

KEYWORDS: *Business excellence, Benchmarking, Halal industry, SMEs*

I. INTRODUCTION

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) play a vital role in most economies especially in developing countries. The World Bank [1] reported that formal SMEs had contribute up to 60% of total employment and up to 40% of national income of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in emerging economies. These numbers are significantly higher when informal SMEs are included. In emerging markets, most formal jobs are generated by SMEs, which create 4 out of 5 new positions. Furthermore, SMEs also expected to contribute more to the developing country's export. Abdullah [2] and Paula [3] suggested that the definition for SMEs changes from time to time based on their significant contribution to the economic position of a particular country. Besides, global Muslim population increased by 1.84% from 2016 (2.14 billion) to 2.18 billion in 2017, which will be excellent opportunities for SME's growing towards sustainability.

Benchmarking among SMEs involves the application of the business excellence model as part of total quality management (TQM) improvement initiatives. Benchmarking is important as it enables business excellence to be developed in organizations. Most studies on business excellence and SMEs assume that the practices of large organizations can be scaled down and applied to SMEs.

Brunei Darussalam continue its pursuit of developing policies, initiatives, and programs that would intensify support for local SMEs. However, as they are designed to assist SMEs in general, it is interesting to see if SMEs operating in the halal environment can similarly benefit from them. The halal industry is growing very faster by covering a number of different industries, ranging from medicines to cosmetics. The confidence of consumers in halal brands has been the most influential factor in their purchasing decision of these products. These factors support the industry's attempt to gain consumer trust and push product penetration to even higher levels. Therefore, the objectives of

this paper are as follows: (i) to find out the relationship between business excellence benchmarking and competitive advantage among the halal industries of Brunei Darussalam (ii) to discover the influencing factors between business excellence benchmarking and competitive advantage among the halal industries of Brunei Darussalam.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Business Excellence

BE meant "excellence" in strategies, business practices, and stakeholder-related performance results that have been validated by assessments based on specific models proven to support the challenging journey towards excellence [4]. In addition, BE is based on Malcolm Baldrige's initiatives to develop a comprehensive management practices standard that can assist companies to assesses readiness and compliance to excellence practices in their quest to enhance business performance. BE has been used by many international organizations to evaluate and benchmark excellent practices and recognize the attainment of this standard.

The first BE model was developed in the mid-1980s and came about as a result of the quality movement in the West, which in turn was a response to the advancements in quality and competitiveness in Japan [4]. The most popular and influential model is called the Malcolm Baldrige Award Model (commonly known as the Baldrige model, the Baldrige criteria, or the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence). The Baldrige model [5] provides a systems perspective for understanding performance management and reflects validated, leading-edge management practices against which an organization can measure itself. Accepted nationally and internationally as a referential model for performance excellence, the Baldrige criteria represents a common language for communication among organizations. It shares best practices and is design to help organization improve their competitiveness by focusing on two goals: continually delivering value to customers, and improving overall organizational performance. On top of that, the Baldrige model plays three important roles: to help improve organizational performance practices, capabilities and results, to facilitate communication and sharing of best-practices information among and within organization of all types, and to serve as a working tool for understanding and managing performance, as well as for planning and opportunities for learning.

Over time, the term "Business Excellence" started to replace the terms "Quality" and "TQM". Today, many countries employ such BE models as the European Foundation for Quality Management Excellence Model (EFQM EM), Australian Business Excellence Framework (ABEF), Kanji's Business Excellence Model (KBEM), Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA), and Total Quality Management (TQM) as a key mechanism to improve the organizational performance and national competitiveness.

The Baldrige criteria has been adapted by the Malaysia Productivity Corporation (MPC) and transformed into the Malaysia Business Excellence Framework, includes seven categories: leadership, strategic planning, customer and market focus, measurement, analysis and knowledge management, human resources focus, process management, and business results [6]. It ensures continuous improvement in products and or services delivery, demonstrates efficient and effective operations, and provides a way to engage and respond to customers and other stakeholders. Those continuous improvements help the organizations to optimize the performance of their organizations and obtain opportunities to learn about best business practices that have been implemented in Malaysia and other countries.

Previous scholars stated that BE models are still evolving from measures perspective [7], [8], [9], [10], [11], [12], [13], [14], [15], [16], [17], [18] due to the changing demand of today's business landscape. Bolboli and Reiche [9] opined that the central process of the BE implementation is to analyze the strategy. All factors in the abovementioned pillars are interconnected; they impact one another in either a positive or negative way, and they need to be considered as a part of the overall system for total organizational excellence [19].

In addition, there are internal and external issues that prevent long-term commitment toward business excellence. Moreover, there are higher ignorance among organizations of their national excellence framework [20], but governments have become more concerned as the value, besides being sustainable, are significant [21]. However, these obstacles can be overcome by greater promotion of identified enablers, including better education, training, and higher senior management involvement [22]. Furthermore, BE also supports other quality initiatives, but it should be well understood [23],

[24]. Angell and Corbett [14] and Brown [25] supported through their research that over time, the extent of BE award program drives continuous improvement within organizations toward higher business performance [26].

Benchmarking among BE practitioners can provide operational insights concerning problematic areas in businesses [13], [27]. With continue effort, organizations can achieve leadership in their line of business [14]. Lasrado and Uzbeck [28] proved that the adoption of best practices of business excellence improves a nation's competitiveness, which in turn leads to sustainable global success. The link between BE initiatives and its variance in outcomes is understudied [29], such as industrial organizations and services, or between private and public organizations [30].

Benchmarking

Van Assen *et al* [31] provides the conception of benchmarking as a systematic comparison process and performance based on certain guided criteria. It is expected to give insights into strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities for improvement. In fact, benchmarking is a part of the total quality process and is a productivity improvement tool that has received considerable attention among companies [28]. In other words, benchmarking as a tool for identifying, understanding, imitation and adopting best practices of other companies that could improve operational performance.

On the other hand, the roles of management are essential in the process of benchmarking [32]. Different countries have different definitions for SMEs due to a number of factors and demographic criteria such as size, location, structure, age, number of employees, sales volume, and ownership through innovation and technology [33]. Various studies indicated that managers may not quickly comprehend the appropriateness and applicability of benchmarking data in their organization due to some incompatible factors involved in benchmarking. The managers' roles are beyond the exercise but also include growing dynamic changes that could push SMEs to be more efficient toward innovation [34]. Kumar [35] also posited that the leadership in a company could determine the success rate of the exercise in the business. In addition, some studies stressed the importance of benchmarking in major business investments even though it meant different things to different people [32], [36], [37] brought to light the issues that were not satisfactorily researched, such as cost, duration, human resource, and partner, that need to be considered in benchmarking exercises. Scholars have recommended a number of tools for benchmarking [38]; [39]; [40]; [41], [42]. Although Broderick *et al.* [43] and Lee *et al.* [44] mentioned that benchmarking among different type of business is important; it is difficult to apply in services. They also stated that benchmarking conducted among firms of different scales have to be considered with the aim of meeting its specific industry standards.

The areas of concern in these kinds of activities are operational performance in manufacturing function, value management process, innovation and technology management, quality assessment, customer satisfaction, and product development process [36]. Monkhouse [45], on the other hand, reported that non-financial measures through benchmarking activity support the management's decision-making process. Sarkis [46] also agreed that there should be a set of widely acceptable characteristics to measure benchmarking effectiveness. Optimization starts with the assessment of the current situation and benchmarking of the best practices [9]. Brown [25] and Ferdowsian [19] proposed that the stages of an organization pursuing business excellence (either implementation, development, maturity or sustainability) should also be consider as factors that might be relevant. The methods of scoring in BE are vital for benchmarking activities and for each criteria of applying for awards associated with the models [30].

The importance of understanding "benchmarking" and its effects on a business has been highlighted in previous studies [47]; [48]. It helps organizations to achieve and maintain their competitive advantage by striving for world-class performance [49]. Benchmarking these winning organizations thus provide insights into the various techniques that make them successful [28]. The application of benchmarking excellence is expected to raise the hope for organizations in maintaining their competitive advantage and long-term profitability [50]. For fulfilling the research objectives, the study has developed the following hypotheses:

H_1: *Leadership, Planning, Information, Customer, People and Process influences the Competitive advantage among the halal industries in Brunei Darussalam*

III. METHODOLOGY

There are three stages (Matured, Intermediate and Early) with six categories (Excellent, Best in class, Good practice achiever, Practitioner, System implementer and Initial adopter) that are based on scores (800 and above, 700-799, 600-6999, 400-5999, 200-399 and Below 200) respectively. Based on the scores, the research tries to find out the overall situation of the BE in Brunei Darussalam. Data regarding the industries of Brunei Darussalam has been collected through the guidelines of Halalan Thayyiban Research Centre, Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali which adaptation of Business Excellence Framework by MPC. This information is linked to a project of identifying organizational best management practices and recommending BE potential support programs to gain competitive edge. For fulfilling the research objectives, the study has gone through quantitative research method by using the following multiple regression analysis.

$$y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_{1}x_{i1} + \beta_{2}x_{i2} + \beta_{3}x_{i3} + \beta_{4}x_{i4} + \beta_{5}x_{i5} + \beta_{6}x_{i6} + \varepsilon$$

Here,

y_i = Competitive advantage

$\beta_{1}x_{i1}$ = Leadership

$\beta_{2}x_{i2}$ = Planning

$\beta_{3}x_{i3}$ = Information

$\beta_{4}x_{i4}$ = Customer

$\beta_{5}x_{i5}$ = People

$\beta_{6}x_{i6}$ = Process

ε = Statistical Error

IV. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Situational Analysis Of Be Performance

There are three stages (Matured, Intermediate and Early) with six categories (Excellent, Best in class, Good practice achiever, Practitioner, System implementer and Initial adopter) that are based on scores (800 and above, 700-799, 600-6999, 400-5999, 200-399 and Below 200) respectively. Based on the scores, the research tries to find out the overall situation of the Business Excellence Assessment for Halal Industry Sustainability among Bruneian Industries through the following tables.

Table 1. Comparison of Countries for Situational Analysis

	Frequency	Percent
Early Stage - Initial Adopter	2	8
Early Stage - System Implementer	10	40
Intermediate Stage - Practitioner	12	48
Intermediate Stage - Good Practice Achiever	1	4
Matured Stage - Best in Class	0	0
Matured Stage – Excellent	0	0
Total	25	100

The above Table 1 shows that most of the companies in Brunei are in Intermediate Stage – Practitioner (48%; n=12) and in Early Stage – System Implementer (40%; n=10) according to the Business Excellence Assessment for Halal Industry Sustainability among Brunei Industries. 8% companies are in early stage (initial adopter). However, the positive trend shows that 1 company is in Intermediate Stage of Good Practice Achiever. However, there is no company that achieve the Excellent or Best in Class Category that specify Matured Stage.

Multicollinearity Test

Table 2. Comparison of Countries for Multicollinearity Test

	Tolerance	VIF
Leadership	.161	6.203
Planning	.130	7.680
Information	.108	9.231
Customer	.128	7.787
People	.114	8.793
Process	.100	9.997

Tolerance value must be more than 0.1 and VIF value must be less than 10. The above Table 2 shows that, the tolerance values are more than 0.1 and VIF values are less than 10. Since, tolerance

value>0.1 and VIF value<10, the test supports the Criteria for Business Excellence Performance in Brunei.

Correlations

All correlations in Table 3 are between dependent variable (Result) and independent variables (Leadership, Planning, Information, Customer, People, Process) is significant at p<0.01.

Table 3. Correlation Effect among BE Criteria in Brunei Darussalam

	Leadership	Planning	Information	Customer	People	Process
Planning	.808**					
Information	.841**	.917**				
Customer	.708**	.860**	.869**			
People	.819**	.861**	.867**	.884**		
Process	.869**	.824**	.857**	.860**	.916**	
Result	.780**	.826**	.895**	.838**	.915**	.877**

** Correlated at p<0.01

Regression

Based on the Table 4, the result of regression on the variables is shown where the value of R Square is 0.894 and the value of F is 25.181 (df=6) at p<0.05. This indicates that the model is significant and the coefficient

Table 4. Regression Effect among the BE Criteria

Model	R Square	F-value	df	Sig. level (p value)
Regression	.894	25.181	6	.000 (p<0.05)

Table 5. Coefficients

Variable	B Value	Sig. level (p value)
Result (DV)	13.74	.006 (p<0.05)
Leadership (IV1)	-.112	.318
Planning (IV2)	-.131	.468
Information (IV3)	.860	.015 (p<0.05)
Customer (IV4)	-.142	.478
People (IV5)	.331	.017 (p<0.05)
Process (IV6)	.168	.363

Based on the above table, Result (DV) = 13.74 + 0.860 (information) + 0.331 (people) + e, where the B value of Result (DV) is 13.74 at p<0.05. The B value of Leadership (IV1) is -.112 at p>0.05; Planning (IV2) is -.131 at p>0.05; Information (IV3) is .860 at p<0.05; Customer (IV4) is -.142 at p>0.05; People (IV5) is .331 at p<0.05 and Process (IV6) is .168 at p>0.05. Based on the significant value, Information (IV3) and People (IV5) are affecting the outcome of Result (DV) the most out of all six independent variables.

Moreover, in Brunei, 'Information' and 'People' influence the overall 'Result' of Business Excellence Performance. The following equations indicate the regression effect of 'Result' in Brunei:

Result (DV) = 13.74 + 0.860 (information) + 0.331 (people) + e

V. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper was to review scholars' perspectives on BE and benchmarking. Coverage included their experiences, either as the assessors or researchers with emphasized highlights from key papers. The paper adds to the knowledge base of business excellence that is deep-rooted in a multicultural organizational environment. In the future, the excellence journey can be studied from other perspectives to strengthen quality systems and to improve the organizational performance as well as its competitive advantage, particularly in Brunei Darussalam. This paper has given a foundation to carry out related studies to the scoring criteria of organizations and the interrelationships between enabling factors, including strategies involving the new industrial revolution which can provide deeper insight into the excellence journey. Future studies can also be carried out in such direction to see the detail measures of each dimension in the BE framework and its impacts on Brunei Darussalam's organizations along with benchmarking activities with global counterparts. These challenges require new ways of thinking of BE which will become increasingly difficult. This is a matter that future studies should address.

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