

Effective Implementation of the Performance Appraisal Process in Universities

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Abstract: Performance management in the public sector is faced with a unique batch of challenges, and these challenges need to be addressed and overcome if universities can hope to succeed in achieving their missions. And yet, many organizations are not even aware that these challenges exist. They're using recommended models and tools but often applying them in the wrong way or wrong context and therefore not seeing the results they would hope for organizations have to build their capacity and improve their organizational effectiveness with an eye towards sustainability and long-term change. Student recruitment is driven by the need to fill available places, but is also influenced by issues of quality, income generation and equity in participation. Funding is a constant source of concern, for both teaching and research, with institutions looking to both diversify and maximise income streams, whilst also looking to achieve enhanced efficiency and value for money. Globalisation and internationalisation, and new technology, pose additional challenges to universities. However, arguably the greatest pressures arise from increasing competition and marketisation, and from the politicisation of higher education. Universities Higher education faces massive pressures for change. Student recruitment is driven by the need to fill available places, but is also influenced by issues of quality, income generation and equity in participation. Funding is a constant source of concern, for both teaching and research, with institutions looking to both diversify and maximise income streams, whilst also looking to achieve enhanced efficiency and value for money. Globalisation and internationalisation, and new technology, pose additional challenges to universities. However, arguably the greatest pressures arise from increasing competition and marketisation, and from the politicisation of higher education. Universities are now in intense competition to recruit students, prompting further consideration of the entire student experience. Against this background, universities are increasingly looking to new forms of internal management. In particular, there is an emphasis on performance, sometimes measured in international terms, in national terms and relative to a peer group of institutions. internal management. In particular, there is an emphasis on performance, sometimes measured in international terms, in national terms and relative to a peer group of institutions. challenges to UK universities. However, arguably the greatest pressures arise from increasing competition and marketisation, and from the politicisation of higher education.

Keywords: Universities, performance, effectiveness, appraisal, implementation.

INTRODUCTION

Effective implementation of the performance appraisal process in universities should take into account the university's vision and mission which will ensure that university goals are kept in sight. According to the performance management survey.com the following should be put in place. Firstly, it is important to clarify the purpose of the performance appraisal instruments it is then necessary to set performance goals with the staff and indeed ensure goals are to departmental goals for the year [1]. Acknowledging and appreciating work which has been

done well should not be overlooked. It is also necessary appraisers provide feedback to staff members throughout the performance appraisal cycle in a timely manner. Further appraisers should track changes in legislation and abide by the demands of the regulations to avoid unnecessary conflicts. Appraisers should ensure they identify previous years' results by discussing data from the previous cycle and determine why some of the goals were not met and agree with the appraises to address them [2].

It is also essential to identify issues, problems and opportunities, recognise issues, problems and opportunities. It then becomes important to determine whether action is needed. The appraiser should ensure buy-ins and understanding of decision arrived at. It is also important to ensure performance appraisal processes incorporate criteria for job description [3]. It is also essential to use objective measurable criteria and appraisers should take into account how staff feels about the process and procedures they have to go through in order to comply with performance appraisal requirements. It is also essential to carry out regular audits of the performance appraisal process and benchmarks.

Performance appraisal and reward

In another study close to the current study Kersten [4] carried out an exploratory study to find a model of performance appraisal and remuneration for lecturers in line with endeavours towards determining factors that enhance lecturers' performance and their expectation on performance. He therefore focused on developing a performance appraisal model founded on competence and achievement of the university's and faculties' strategic plans as well as developing lecturers' remuneration model associated with standard competences and achievements.

The researcher carried out a case study to gather data and provide perspectives on performance appraisal in higher education institutions. In its sample this empirical study had 11 post graduate masters and doctoral researchers. The study used a combination of purposive and snowballing sampling to identify specific samples of staff appraisal. The sampling focused on obtaining a comprehensive set of perspectives from staff at different levels. The study revealed that there were more similarities than differences and that in fact it was significant to note that the institutions had developed performance appraisal systems bent on performance restructuring the processes and rationalisation of the faculties such that institutional goals could be achieved. He further noted that participants felt there was a top down approach in the development on the system. While the researcher sees an effort in the research cited to seek ways of developing the appraisal system he is keen to find out the extent to which the institutions in the current study seek strategies to improve their performance appraisal and reward system.

Types of performance appraisal instruments and their effectiveness

The need for effective performance appraisal to a great extent depends on instruments used. Indeed, formal performance appraisal is widely used in Human Resources Management. In fact, surveys reported in 1970 and 1980 in the United State organisations indicated that between 74% and 96% had some formal performance appraisal system. In fact, performance

appraisal instruments have been brought in to enable measuring and determining how well an employee performs job related tasks [5].

Performance appraisal instruments become important in that if used properly accurate and timely feedback can change the behaviour of employees. According to Tiziner and Kopelman [6] could be fostered through the raters' identification of the employees' strength and weaknesses, provision of feedback and facilitation of communication with supervisors. Tiziner and Kopelman [6] conclude that performance appraisal systems become useless if they do not elicit positive reactions among raters and rates. The researcher finds their conclusions of interest to the current study as effective appraisal in the selected institutions will make it easier to bring in appropriate rewards for staff. In addition to the need to elicit positive reactions among raters and ratees other critical elements such as distributive fairness and procedural fairness help to enhance an effective performance appraisal. Indeed, Cardy [7] reaffirm the view that the absence of fair procedures increases distress in fact when staff are assured of the fairness of a performance appraisal and performance ratings.

What seems to be important is that when staff feel they are fairly rated they tend to buy into the goals of the institution. One problem that seems to be prevalent in performance appraisal is how to perform the evaluator role. According to Kernsten [8] problems arise from the fact that the appraiser serves as both coach and judge. In fact, poor administration of performance appraisal could destroy the appraisees self-worth so it is important for each institution to check whether the performance appraisal is perceived as intended and to find out whether the users still support the system and process.

Formal Performance Appraisal

According to Jacobs Forsyth and Naomi [9] performance appraisal can be described as the systematic attempts to distinguish the more efficient workers from the less efficient workers and so discriminate strengths and weaknesses an individual may have across many jobs. Performance appraisal is based on the assumption that differences exist among appraisers and that supervisors are able and willing to distinguish between employees. It is also assumed that accurate bids and timely feedback can change behaviour. According to Grint [10] both the individual and organisation benefits. Further effectiveness of the performance appraisal is dependent upon users' perceptions and acceptance. According to Selden and Sowa [11] problems could emerge from conflicting roles of being coach, judge, lack of raters', training or personal bias as favouritism subjectivity and leniency.

The third, dissatisfaction arises from the amount of feedback, which stimulates negative feelings.

Performance appraisal tends to destroy the appraisee's self-worth combined with the fact that appraisee's tendency to overrate themselves. In light of the above organisations have to ensure their appraisal systems remain relevant hence prompting the following research questions: What factors are critical for successful implementation of the performance appraisal system?

Rating Approaches

According to Lansburg [12] three different approaches exist. These are cost-related variables, judgement or traits or attitudes and observing and recording behaviour. However, these give no clue to the employee on how to improve his or her performance. Further its essential that the rating task assumes the ratees is well trained. It follows that the ratees have to be skilled in special knowledge and ability [10]. Appraisal can emanate from a complete combination of upward, downward, lateral and self-appraisal in a 360-degree performance appraisal.

The 360-degree performance appraisal

According to Wise [13], in a typical 360-degree process, supervisors, subordinates and peers provide feedback using some standardised feedback. Because the appraisee is fully involved he / she tends to reflect on his / her actions. Managers also benefit in seeing how their judgements differ with these of their colleagues. The disadvantage is that these are causes where self-ratings tend to be over generous [14].

Rating techniques

According to Berry [15] techniques can be distinguished on the basis of:

- Ease of development
- Amount of information it can yield
- Purpose of rating.

The most common one is the GRS. The Graphic Rating Scale allows for easy comparison. The disadvantage is that it does not provide adequate information. Next the (BARS) Behaviour anchored rating scale – uses behavioural statements or concrete examples to illustrate multiple levels of performance. According to Baxton [16] raters get their idea of what constitutes good performance. According to Tizner and Kopelna 2002, BARS tends to produce marginally higher interrater agreement. It should be noted that preference of a specific rating scale depends on preference of raters in the organisation and organisational policies.

Performance-based pay

It is normally preferred in order to improve performance and increase productivity. This falls in a number of broad schemes which include:

- Individual based incentive schemes,
- Profit sharing, gain sharing and
- Skill / competence based pay

According to Blanket *et al.*, [17] implications of a performance based incentive plan proved to lead to attraction and retention of staff. A selection effect tends to encourage many employees to leave the institution.

Disadvantages

Performance based compensation programmes encourage too much competition as opposed to cooperation [18]. It tends to undermine team work. Secondly there are generally inadequate criteria to measure performance and very often criteria is not well understood. At times the appraisal systems in the objectives of the appraisal system may not be understood. Thirdly there is often lack of feedback on performance. Fourthly there is absence of a right mix of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. Fifth there is lack of appropriate pay given the prevailing economic environments. Other problems include bias.

Training

An effective performance appraisal system calls for well-planned rater training. Raters must be trained to observe, gather data, process and integrate behaviour relevant information. According to Rudner [5] proposes that training should have three goals. First, it should set clear benchmarks. Second it should ensure the appraisers understand and are familiar with the measure they will be working with such that they understand the sequence of operations. Further training should provide trainees with specific skills and should be frequently updated so that the system is in line with current systems. The appraisers and appraisees should be familiar with the appraisal instrument. Above all, the appraisal system should be refreshed on a regular continuing basis. Staff participation generates a sense of commitment. It helps to engender a more human and ethical human resource management decision making process [19]. In fact Selden and Sowa [11] reaffirms this when she indicates their systems implemented the following meaningful consultation with employees are more effective.

CONCLUSION

Effective performance management is something every organization wants. Without driven employees who are performing well, businesses cannot achieve their full potential. Existing performance management systems usually require setting annual performance goals, a lengthy and labor intensive review process that may result in disengaged employees. This process isn't effective – since it sets annual goals that become stale quickly, and a retroactive review that leaves little place for employees to course-correct.

Today, performance management is changing into a real-time way of communicating with employees and aligning them with performance. It's a result of a better understanding of how to motivate employees and the insight that traditional performance management is

broken into elements to ensure that performance management is effective and modern.

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