

THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PRACTICES AND PROBLEMS: THE CASE OF ETHIOPIAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, RIYADH

Beshir Shemsu Mohammed

Mr., Ethiopian International School, Riyadh, beshir.shemsu@gmail.com

Abstract

This study focuses on Ethiopian International School, Riyadh in the area of employees' performance appraisal. The school is selected due to proximity and conveniences to undertake the research.

Therefore, knowing the practice used and spotting the problem helps to analyze the performance of employees of the school, in light of the "Employees Performance Appraisal Manuals", can help to understand, if effectiveness and efficiency is impaired or not. If effectiveness and efficiency is impaired the organization cannot meet its goals and objectives.

Accordingly the research attempted to answer the following four basic research questions

1. What are the natures of employees' performance appraisal practices in Ethiopian International School?
2. What are the major problems in the practices of performance appraisal of employees?
3. What are the objectives of employees' performance appraisal in EIS?
4. What are the potential sources of employees' dissatisfactions regarding performance appraisal?

Furthermore, a total of 25 Questionnaires were administered to respondents selected using a purposive sampling technique. Accordingly the following conclusions were drawn from the project undertaken:

- Evaluators rating subordinates on the basis of personal liking and disliking exists at moderate level in EIS.
- The Performance Evaluators keep employee track records and portfolios at a moderate level.
- The study indicates that school was using PA for motivation of employees at moderate level, which shows the use of it for motivational purposes is not at the desired level. Consequently, it hurts the moral of employees and demoralizes them from competition and creativity. Thus, employees without competition and creativities would be cost to the organization.

Keywords: Performance Appraisal, Employee Motivation, Human Resource, Performance Evaluation

1. AN OVERVIEW OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

An organization's success or failure is highly determined by effective and efficient utilization of resources at its disposal, such as human, material, financial, and information resources. Among these four resources, the human resource is the most important part and crucial of all resources for the survival of an organization or business firms.

It is important to remember that people do the work and create ideas that show the organizational service". Therefore, it is agreed that resources remain unutilized unless the human element is involved. The degree of

human resource contribution should be evaluated in the development of the organization or business firm, and is called Performance Appraisal (PA). PA is the identification, measurement, and management of human performance in an organization (Gomez, 2001).

Performance Appraisal (PA) benefits both Employees and Employers. Employers benefit from understanding their employees' weaknesses and strengths. Understanding the employees helps to make basic enforcement for weakly performing employee by giving training and development in order to improve his/her performance if not to punish. It also helps to make remuneration and promotion readily available for those who performed well. PA is not only important to employees problem identification, but also important to the organization for effective utilization of human resource by identifying strong employees from best for utilization of manpower, to bring effectiveness and efficiency. Employees benefited by getting feedback about their performance of certain period in time, to improve themselves on their poor performance or to be motivated for their good performance.

An organization's performance management system helps it to meet its short and long term goals and objectives by helping management and employees do their jobs more efficiently and effectively, and performance appraisal is one part of this system (Bacal, 1999).

The ultimate objective of performance appraisal is identifying, measuring, and managing of human performance in an organization and to give feedback to employees who may improve their performance on job and also organizations or business firms' success. Additionally, information obtained during the appraisal process can be used as a basis for personnel management, merit increment, termination, carrier planning and promotion, and layoff, succession planning, transfer, bonus, and criteria for selection procedure validation by using different appraisal methods.

This study focuses on Ethiopian International School, Riyadh in the area of employees' performance appraisal, whose performances of employees are measured by qualitative method rather than quantitative method. The school is selected due to proximity and conveniences to undertake the research.

Therefore, knowing the practice used and spotting the problem helps to analyze the performance of employees. Consequently, in light of the existing school "Employees Performance Appraisal Manuals", the school would be in a good position to understand, whether effectiveness and efficiency is impaired or not. If effectiveness and efficiency is impaired the organization cannot meet its goals and objectives.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Obviously, PA is one of the most important aspects of human resource manager, and it is important to any organization. Therefore, a well-designed, constructed and implemented performance appraisal system is a key to retain and boost the morale of the employees.

Thus, the researcher is initiated to focus on Ethiopian International School, Riyadh (EIS, Riyadh) because of the continuous complainants of teachers from the inside and parents from the outside. Inside employees are heard complaining about their pay, working environment, promotion, job assignment, demotion, job description, transfer, placement, lay off, and separation.

Furthermore, as there is no practical reform that has been undertaken in the administrative wing so far, the finance, the procurement and property administration services at the center levels are still bureaucratic and inefficient. This predicament has put the daily business of the school in a limbo. (EIS, Internal Auditors report 2014)

Externally, parents dissatisfaction about the sluggish services of the school is heard on meetings, point of sales, and parent-school forums. This initiated the researcher to make it his focal point for his study, as he is a permanent senior teacher of the school.

Hence, this study tries to answer the following basic research questions:

1. What are the natures of employees' performance appraisal practices in Ethiopian International School?
2. What are the major problems in the practices of performance appraisal of employees?
3. What are the objectives of employees' performance appraisal in EIS?
4. What are the potential sources of employees' dissatisfactions regarding performance appraisal?

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this research is to assess, identify and analyze the practices and effectiveness of Performance Appraisal in Ethiopian International School, Riyadh and to give recommendations based on the principles and concepts in the literature review, and the empirical findings of the study.

The specific objectives are:

- To explore the performance appraisal practice utilized in the school under study.
- To assess the objectives of performance appraisal of the school under study.
- To illustrate the nature of performance appraisal practices and related problems within the aforementioned organization

1.3 Significance of the Study

The study is significant to give feedback to employees, employers, other stakeholders and researchers about the school's performance appraisal practice and its effectiveness.

Performance appraisal helps employees of the organization by determining who shall receive merit increase, counsels" on their improvement, training needs; promotion, and identifies those who should be transferred.

Moreover, The results of the study helps to improve employees job performance, encourages to express their views, or to seek clarification on job duties, broaden their outlook, capacity, placement, facilitates selection for reward and promotion of the best qualified employee, by preventing grievance and increasing the analytical abilities of supervisors. These in turn helps the school to benefit from the improved performance of employees.

The study is significant to the stakeholders in its provision of information about level of employees" motivation. Thus, if the level of motivation among employees is high, the quality of service rendered to the stakeholders will be high. If the motivation of employee is very low the level of provision of service will be low.

Additionally, the study would help as secondary data for future use in the academic arena.

1.4 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The present study focuses on permanent employees of EIS, Riyadh. Hence, the study is delimited to Performance Appraisal system of the academic and non-academic permanent staffs of the school, because most customer dissatisfaction and complaining emanates from such services among others.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research design

According to Y.K Singh (2006), research design is essentially a statement of the object of the inquiry and the strategies for collecting the evidences, analyzing the evidences and reporting the findings." The purpose of this research is to study the practice and effectiveness of employees" performance appraisal system in Ethiopian International School, Riyadh focusing on permanent staff.

EIS, Riyadh is selected by using convenience sampling method due to proximity and accessibility. Purposive sampling technique was utilized to select employees of the school.

Therefore, to make this practical both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to approach the study subjects. Thus, 25 respondents were selected using a purposive sampling technique. Furthermore, a Qualitative method was used by conducting interview with human resource office of the school. After the required data were collected, it was processed, and analyzed by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, (SPSS).

2.2 Research Methodology

In this chapter, the practical methods that were used in order to answer the research questions and meet the objectives of this research are presented. As such, it includes: The study area, study subjects, sources of data, methods of data collection, and method of data processing and analysis are presented independently as follows.

2.2.1 Area of the Study

The actual research was conducted on Performance Appraisal Practice and effectiveness of Ethiopian International School permanent employees in Riyadh.

2.2.2 The Study Subjects

The populations under the study were 100 permanent employees of the school. Participants in the research were 25 permanent employees, the principal who currently also acts as the school Human Resource Manager.

2.2.3 Sources of Data

Sources of data for the study were both primary and secondary. The primary was collected from permanent employees of the school by using purposive sampling method. Secondary data was gathered from published and unpublished theoretical literatures and empirical studies.

2.2.4 Data Collection Methods and Research Instruments

Research questionnaire used was adopted from Marie Burns Walsh, B.S., Louisiana State University, 2003, and in order to collect the primary data from EIS employees, questionnaires consisting of all the required variables for the validity and reliability of the research result were distributed to 25 employees purposely, by excluding the management members. Additionally, unstructured interview will be conducted with the principal in order to obtain data related to employees' performance appraisal to understand the system of assessments in general. Also secondary data: such as school manual, publications and annual magazine of the school was referred.

2.2.5 Methods of Data Processing and Analysis

After collecting the required data, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16 was used for the purpose of processing and analysis of the results. Descriptive statistics based on tables have been used to analyze information on all factors/variables including respondent personal information. The descriptive statistics used in the study were based on tables in percentile and t-test distribution presentation for the responses of discussion including personal information of the respondents.

Regarding the t-test interpretations for variables used on Likert scale; measurement will be used on the basis of the survey; 5=strongly agree; 4=agree; 3=neither agree nor disagree (indifferent); 2 = disagree; 1=strongly disagree. The mean level of agreement between the group or of the group is categorized on the scale; SA = Strongly Agree (4.51 or greater); A = Agree (3.51 – 4.50); NA = Neither Agree nor Disagree (Indifferent) (2.51 – 3.50); D = Disagree (1.51 – 2.50); and, SD = Strongly Disagree (1.49 or less). And, to make more comfortable for analysis three base scales will be used, Agree, 3.51 and above, neither agree nor disagree 2.51 to 3.50, and disagree less than 2.50.

2.2.6 Data Quality Assurance

According to Kothari, (2004), sound measurement must meet the tests of validity, reliability and practicality. In fact, these are the three major considerations one should use in evaluating a measurement tool. "Validity refers to the extent to which a test measures what we actually wish to measure. Reliability has to do with the accuracy and precision of a measurement procedure ... Practicality is concerned with wide range of factors of economy, convenience, and interpretability ..." Therefore, I briefly take up the relevant details concerning these tests of sound measurement. In addition face to face interview was conducted with the principal of the institution understudy, for the purposes of triangulation. Therefore, the validity, reliability and practicality of this study are ascertained.

3. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The following discussion is organized around sub-topics reflecting the research objectives and questions. The purpose is to simplify the discussion and to contribute to a better understanding of the research findings.

Accordingly, the discussion aims to answer the following research questions concerning the organization under study:

- What are the natures of employees' performance appraisal practices in Ethiopian International School?
- What are the major problems in the practices of performance appraisal of employees?

- What are the objectives of employees' performance appraisal in EIS?
- What are the potential sources of employees' dissatisfactions regarding performance appraisal?
- What are the alternative solutions for any problems regarding the practices of employees' performance appraisal in the aforementioned organizations?

These research questions were approached by using the questionnaire based on the Likert Scale, which studied the attitudes of the respondents and informants employees regarding human resource performance appraisal of the school under the study. In addition to these, documents of the organization under the study, which were used for the purpose of performance appraisal, have been used for the discussion and analysis.

Questionnaires were prepared, distributed to those permanent employees of the school under the study, and collected during the months of August, 2014.

Out of the 100 total permanent employees of EIS, 25 permanent staffs were considered for the study. Accordingly, 25 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. Of which, all were collected and used for data analysis purposes.

3.1 The current problems of PA practice in EIS

One of the basic research question in which this research attempted to assess was the Performance Appraisal problem of EIS .accordingly, the data collected from employees of EIS indicates moderate level of agreement, i.e. 2.76 for the item "My supervisor accurately evaluates my performance to the extent that I will be rewarded for doing what I must or penalized for failing to do so"

Furthermore, respondents showed moderate level of agreement (i.e. 2.8)for the item "the rater usually keeps a file on what I have done during the appraisal period to evaluate my performance" and "My rater frequently lets me know how I am doing" respectively.

In light of the above fact, even though, the aggregate P-value ($p = 0.025011$) is less than the significance level (0.05)scholars assert that , Problems related to Performance appraisal can be emanate from the system of appraisal which involves the objective of the appraisal it wants to serve, administrations system, forms used and procedure used to make up the system.

No	Item	Mean
1	The evaluator is influenced by personal liking and disliking when evaluating my performance	3.2
2	My supervisor avoids giving performance ratings which may have negative consequences to his/her subordinates	3.16
3	My supervisor accurately evaluates my performance to the extent that I will be rewarded for doing what I must or penalized for failing to do so	2.76
4	In order to avoid resentment and rivalry among colleagues, my supervisor gives equivalent ratings	3.28
5	If I have question or reservations about my performance evaluation, my evaluator provides me with specific examples of things which I have accomplished during the evaluation period	3.28
6	My supervisor generally supports his evaluation with specific incidents of good and poor performances.	3.96
7	My rater usually keeps a file on what I have done during the appraisal period to evaluate my performance,	2.8
8	Evaluation of my performance is based on my accomplishment and achievement.	3.56
9	In my recent evaluation, compared to my colleagues my rater gave me a fair assessment	3.44
10	Unqualified person rates my work	3.2

11	My rater frequently lets me know how I am doing.	2.8
	Cumulative Mean	3.224615385
	Stand. Dev.	0.366786783
	standard error	0.10588
	Test mean	3.5
	t value	2.600912499
	df	24
	T critical (p=0.05, 24DF)	1.7109
	Cumulative probability: P(T ≤ 2.600912499)	0.00000

According to Deborah F.B and Brain H. Kleiner (1997) organizations need to have a systematic framework to ensure that performance appraisal is "fair" and "consistent". In their study of "designing effective performance appraisal system", they conclude that designing an effective appraisal system requires a strong commitment from top management. The system should provide a link between employee performance and organizational goals through individualized objectives and performance criteria. They further argued that the system should help to create a motivated and committed workforce. (ibid)30

The system should have a framework to provide appropriate training for supervisors, raters, and employees, a system for frequent review of performance, accurate recordkeeping, a clearly defined measurement system, and a multiple rater group to perform the appraisal.

3.2. The objectives of employees' performance appraisal in the school

No	Item	Mean
1	Information generated through performance evaluation is used to give feedback to subordinates so that they know where they stand	3.16
2	Information generated through performance evaluation in strongly determines pay and promotion decisions	2.48
3	Information generated through performance evaluation in is used as a basis to warn subordinates about unsatisfactory performance and helps supervisors make discharge or retention decision	2.96
4	Information generated through performance evaluation in is used to counsel and coach subordinates so that they will improve their performance	3.08
5	Information generated through performance evaluation in is used to motivate subordinates through recognition and support.	2.46
6	Information generated through performance evaluation in is designed to strengthen the relationship between supervisors and subordinates	2.6
7	In my opinion, the performance evaluation system in is serving its purpose.	4
	Mean	2.988571429
	Stand. Dev.	0.476997412
	standard error	0.19473

	Test mean	2.5
	t value	2.508968462
	df	24
	T critical (p=0.05, 24DF)	1.7109
	Cumulative probability: P(T ≤ 2.508968462)	0.00000

As it is shown on the above table, employee respondents of EIS were asked to answer about the objectives of employee performance appraisal in the school. Accordingly, low level of agreement has been reflected (i.e. 2.46, 2.6, and 2.46) for items, "Information generated through performance evaluation in strongly determines pay and promotion decisions" Information generated through performance evaluation in is designed to strengthen the relationship between supervisors and subordinates and "Information generated through performance evaluation in is used to motivate subordinates through recognition and support" respectively.

3.3. The potential sources of employees' dissatisfactions regarding performance appraisal

No	Item	Mean
1	There is no recognition and motivational schemes	3.08
2	I think the performance appraisal process is a waste of time	3.12
3	Absence of clarity on the evaluation form	1.88
4	Absence of feedback	1.2
5	Lack of objective and prompt evaluation system	1.88
6	Unqualified person rates my work	1
	Mean	2.026666667
	Stand. Dev.	0.376651917
	standard error	0.36902
	Test mean	2.5
	t value	1.282676639
	df	24
	T critical (p=0.05, 24DF)	1.7109

Since the P-value (0.32415) is greater than the significance level (0.05), we can accept the majority of the respondents are dissatisfied with the PA practice ,due to absence of recognition and motivational schemes(i.e. mean=3.08).consequently, the majority of the employee respondents receives the PA practice as a waste of time.(i.e.=mean=3.12)

4. SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

On the basis of the analysis the following findings are taken, respondents has been shown a strong level of agreement for the following Performance Appraisal problems in Ethiopian International School, Riyadh

- supervisors generally supports their evaluation with specific incidents of good and poor performances(Mean=3.96)
- The evaluator is influenced by personal liking and disliking when evaluating performance(Mean=3.6)

- If there is a question or reservations about performance evaluation, evaluators provides with specific examples of things which the appraise have accomplished during the evaluation period”(Mean=3.6)
- Evaluators rarely keep files on what employees have done during the appraisal period (Mean 2.8)

In light of the above fact, even though, the aggregate P-value ($p = 0.025011$) is less than the significance level (0.05)scholars assert that , Problems related to Performance appraisal can be emanate from the system of appraisal which involves the objective of the appraisal it wants to serve, administrations system, forms used and procedure used to make up the system.

Regarding the objectives PA, low level of agreement has been reflected on the following items

- Information generated through performance evaluation in strongly determines pay and promotion decisions (mean= 2.48)
- Information generated through performance evaluation in is designed to strengthen the relationship between (mean=2.4)
- Information generated through performance evaluation in strongly determines pay and promotion decisions(2.46)

Last but not least, the majority of the respondents believe that there is no recognition and motivational schemes (mean=3.0).Nevertheless, the respondents thought the performance appraisal process is a waste of time (3.12)

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the previous chapter, analysis and interpretation of the study was made based on the data obtained through questionnaire distributed to, and an interview conducted with HRM and supervisor of Ethiopian International School, Riyadh. Based on the analysis and interpretation, conclusion and recommendations of the study were made as follows.

5.1 Conclusion

On the basis of the previous findings, the following conclusions were drawn.

- Raters rating subordinates on the basis of personal liking and disliking exists at moderate level in EIS. And in addition, raters avoiding giving performance rating having negative consequence exists at moderate level.
- The raters in both moderately keep files on what employees done during the appraisal period.
- The specific incident effect errors exist at moderate level in the school, which the rater commits the bias of giving greater weight to recent occurrences when appraising an individual's performance. Though its level of existence is low, employees creating positive impression in the minds the organization supervisor is clear, which the subordinates sought what is not their achievements in return from their supervisors. This practice creates distrust and weakens competitiveness among employees and spoils organizations" culture.
- The study indicates that school was using PA for motivation of employees at moderate level, which shows the use of it for motivational purposes is not at the desired level. Consequently, it hurts the moral of employees and demoralizes them from competition and creativity. Thus, employees without competition and creativities would be cost to the organization.
- The practice of supervisors accurately evaluating their subordinate to the extent of they are being rewarded for doing so and penalized for failing not doing so is not adequate enough in EIS
- Information generated through performance appraisal is used in the school at a lower level in order to determine warnings about their unsatisfactory performance and to help supervisors to make decisions of retention or discharge.
- It is also difficult to say that information generated through performance appraisal is used to diagnose the problem of both employees and the school understudy.
- The performance appraisal is not on the base of employees" accomplishments and achievements.

- Some of the school employees do not know the way to appeal the performance rating they think is biased.

5.2 Recommendations

On the basis of analysis and its findings, the following recommendations have been forwarded

- Biases of different types, such as personal liking and disliking, avoiding giving performance rating may have negative consequences to employees, and can be managed by developing policy that can guide and control the existence of such practice in Ethiopian International School.
- The school should maximize giving feedbacks to the subordinate employees, as it benefits both the organization and the employees. Employees who knew where they stand strive to improve their performance. As a result, if their performance is improved, organization's efficiency will be improved.
- Since motivation enhances employees' moral for creativity and competition, creative mind innovates new product or services that shall improve productivity/service quality which as a result brings about maximizing efficiency and effectiveness. This eventually brings about the attainment of organizational goals. Therefore, the organization understudy and should work hard to use the information generated through performance appraisal for motivation of employees.
- From the current scenario of using the information generated through PA for promotion and payment at lower level, it is good for the school to use the information for balanced payment and promotions.
- The school needs to maximize the use of PA in its respective managerial systems, in order to correct the behavior of employees with low performance and make them more efficient and effective. If this measure could not correct the behavior of their employees, the organization should consider the question of retention or discharge in order to minimize cost and maximize benefit of the organizations.
- The school need to use the performance appraisal to strengthen the relationship between the superior and subordinate by implementing motivational scheme, creating transparency, avoiding bias, and improving employees attitude by giving training and development to the employees in order to help to avoid employees' self perceptions wrongly.
- The school needs to use the performance appraisal to help the employees to improve their job. For such purposes, they should develop policy which enhances the improvement of employees' job.
- As it decreases the litigation cases and brings about more trust between the rater and the ratee, keeping file or document for what employees perform during evaluation period is essential and the school need to develop the culture, and maximize its use.
- The school should review the policy if any, and refresh in the way it brings change in the organizations behavior, to enhance effectiveness and efficiency in order to improve their service quality, to satisfy their internal and external customers.
- The school should formulate policy of managing such organizational problems of employees creating positive impression in the mind of their subordinates to reap unsought benefit.
- The school lacks the provision of training to both supervisors and subordinates employees about the relevance of the performance appraisal, and need to give them adequate and timely training, and this also should be maintained as an organizational culture.
- EIS, Riyadh should develop policy that incorporates the above recommendations as a result of this study, in order to be benefited from the employees' performance appraisal.

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