

STAFF APPRAISAL IN SCHOOLS IN RELATION TO MOTIVATION

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Abstract:

This seminar paper explores the intricate relationship between staff appraisal systems and motivation among school personnel. In the education sector, particularly in schools, the effectiveness of teaching and administrative functions is heavily influenced by the morale and motivation of the staff. The paper examines how structured and fair appraisal systems can serve as a tool for enhancing job satisfaction, performance, and professional development. Drawing on various theories that can lead to motivation, the paper analyzes the key

components of effective appraisal systems, such as goal-setting, feedback mechanisms, recognition, and career progression. It provides highlight on the, common rater errors. It also addresses challenges such as bias, inadequate training and resources, and resistance to appraisal system. The study concludes that, by recognising the importance of staff appraisal and addressing its challenges and imitations, schools can create a positive and supportive environment that fosters staff motivation, improve staff performance and enhances student learning outcomes.

Keywords: staff appraisal, staff, motivation, school.

Introduction

Staff appraisal is a crucial aspect of human resource management in schools. It involves the systematic evaluation of an employee's job performance and potential for growth. The primary goal of staff appraisal is to improve staff performance, enhance student learning outcomes, and promote a positive school culture. This opinion paper aims to explore the concept of staff appraisal, its importance in schools, and its relation to motivation.

Staff appraisal in schools is a systematic process used to evaluate teachers' and staff members' performance. It involves assessing their strengths, identifying areas for improvement, and setting professional development goals. Appraisal methods may include classroom observations, self-assessments, peer reviews, and student feedback (Armstrong, 2021).

Performance appraisal is the important mechanisms for the excellence of the organization to ensure effective implementation, performance evaluation should be planned, controlled and managed effectively. The implementation of performance evaluation should be done as accurately as possible because it will affect the assessment in decision-making related to the promotion, determination of training, exchange and movement of worker's salary (Abdul,2014).

Staff can be broadly defined as the collective human resource of an organization tasked with operational and strategic functions. The term staff in schools refers to all individuals employed to support the educational mission of the institution. This includes both teaching staff (e.g., teachers, heads of departments) and non-teaching staff (e.g., administrative personnel, support staff, and maintenance workers). The concept of staff encompasses their roles, responsibilities, professional identity, and contribution to school effectiveness.

Motivation and work performance

The effectiveness of the individual can be achieved if employees can be motivated. The successful management of organizational alignment of interests with the interests of the individual depends on the success to motivate employees to produce the desired results.

A well-structured appraisal system enhances motivation by recognizing employees' efforts and providing constructive feedback. When staff members receive recognition for their hard work, they feel valued, which boosts morale and job satisfaction. However, if appraisals are poorly managed such as being overly critical or biased, they can demoralize employees and reduce their commitment to school goals (Robbins & Judge, 2019).

Motivation

The word 'motivation' comes from the Latin word 'mover' which means 'to move'. Motivation is a continuous process in doing a job.

Motivation is defined as a set of processes that energizes a person's behaviour, sustains it and directs it towards a goal so that state of equilibrium is attained. This definition suggests that when an individual has a need, that drive which forces him to seek to satisfy the need is motivation (Agulanna and Onukaogu 2019).

Motivation is a desire to do something comprehensive. It occurs due to physiological and psychological tension towards an objective to be achieved. Stimulus and environmental influences may reinforce the degree of one's desire to do something in earnest. Motivation is defined as the internal process that drives individuals to engage in certain behaviors. It can be intrinsic (driven by internal factors such as a sense of achievement) or extrinsic (driven by external rewards like pay or recognition).

Donnelly, Gibson and Ivancevich (1984:309) as cited in (Peretomode and Peretomode, 2023), opined that, from a manager's perspective, a person who is motivated can be described thus:

- The person works hard;
- The person sustains a pace of hard work; and
- The person directs his or her behaviour towards important goals.

Thus, motivation involves effort, persistence and goals.

Motivation in the Educational Setting

In the educational setting, motivation plays a critical role in teachers' job performance, as motivated educators are more likely to create engaging learning environments and foster student success. Factors such as job satisfaction, professional growth opportunities, recognition, and a supportive work culture influence teachers' motivation. The school environment, leadership, and quality of appraisal systems can directly impact how teachers perceive their work and their motivation to improve their performance.

It is therefore important to state that for the teacher to discharge their duties they must be duly motivated to love what they are doing or expected to do. Teachers' conditions of service facilitate teachers' interest in delivering their services. Those benefits and motivations that

teachers enjoy in the course of serving in the educational sector must be met for productivity and national development (Eze 2015).

Theories of Motivation

Several theories of motivation provide frameworks for understanding how different factors can influence employee behavior. Some of them are:

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: This theory suggests that motivation is driven by the fulfillment of hierarchical needs, from basic physiological needs to self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). In the context of schools, teachers must have their basic needs met (e.g., salary and job security) before they can be motivated by higher needs, such as professional growth or recognition.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory: Herzberg posits that factors leading to job satisfaction (motivators) are distinct from those leading to job dissatisfaction (hygiene factors). Motivators include recognition, achievement, and responsibility, while hygiene factors include salary, job security, and working conditions (Herzberg, 1959). Appraisal systems that recognize teachers' achievements can be powerful motivators.

Vroom's Expectancy Theory: Vroom argues that motivation is determined by an individual's expectations of the outcome of their efforts. If employees believe that their effort will lead to desired rewards, they will be more motivated to perform (Vroom, 1964).

Work Performance Appraisal

This is a process of evaluating an employee's current or past performance relating to his or her performance standard. Performance appraisal is the examination, evaluation and description of employees performance as to how well they are doing or have done their jobs, pointing out individual's job relevant strengths and weaknesses (Peretomode and Peretomode, 2023).

The aim of performance appraisal is to improve performance. So employees should have feedback, development and incentives to help the person eliminate performance deficiencies and to continue to perform against par. Thus, if a person scales through appraisal he is rewarded based on his performance and not just increase in salary but also in rank

Higher rank comes with higher responsibilities, authorities and recognition. For instance, if a lecturer is promoted to the rank of the senior lecturer, he can be assigned to teach and supervise Ph.D students, can become an acting HOD and can be chairman of committee and become coordinator of units (Uche 2020).

Importance of Staff Appraisal

Staff appraisal is essential in schools for several reasons:

1. **Improved Staff Performance:** Regular appraisal helps staff identify areas of strength and weakness, set goals for improvement, and develop strategies for achieving those goals

2. **Enhanced Student Learning Outcomes:** By evaluating staff performance, schools can ensure that staff are using effective instructional methods, which ultimately benefits student learning.
3. **Promoting Accountability:** Staff appraisal holds staff accountable for their performance, encouraging them to take responsibility for their teaching practices and student outcomes.
4. **Promoting Professional Development:** Staff appraisal provides opportunities for teachers to reflect on their practice, identify areas for growth, and develop plans for professional development (Kumar, 2018).

Process Of Staff Appraisal In Schools

Staff appraisal in schools is a systematic process aimed at evaluating the performance, competencies, and professional development needs of teaching and non-teaching staff. It serves both developmental and accountability purposes. The process generally includes the following steps:

1. **Setting Objectives and Criteria:** At the beginning of the appraisal cycle, clear objectives are set in alignment with the school's mission and improvement plan. These objectives often cover teaching quality, student progress, and professional responsibilities. Setting clear performance expectations is essential for fair and effective teacher evaluation.
2. **Self Assessment:** Staff members complete a self-evaluation where they reflect on their performance, highlight achievements, and identify areas for growth. This promotes ownership and self-awareness in professional development. Self-assessment encourages reflective practice and aligns with the principles of formative assessment (OECD, 2013).
3. **Classroom Observation:** Appraisers (usually senior leaders or heads of departments) conduct scheduled and sometimes unscheduled classroom observations. These provide direct insight into teaching practices, classroom management, and student engagement. Classroom observation remains a cornerstone of staff appraisal, offering objective data on instructional methods.
4. **Gathering Feedback:** Additional data such as student results, peer reviews, and feedback from parents or learners can be used to support the evaluation process. This provides a holistic view of staff performance. Multi-source feedback ensures a comprehensive appraisal by incorporating different stakeholder perspectives (Pont, Nusche, & Moorman, 2008).
5. **Appraisal Meeting:** The appraiser and the staff member meet to discuss the findings. This is a two-way dialogue focused on reviewing achievements, challenges, and developmental goals. Constructive feedback is essential in this stage. Effective feedback during appraisal meetings enhances motivation and performance.

6. Development Plan: Based on the appraisal outcomes, a professional development plan is created. This outlines training, mentoring, or other support needed for improvement. Targeted professional development is key to sustained improvement in teaching quality.

7. Follow-Up and Monitoring: Progress toward development goals is monitored throughout the appraisal cycle. Follow-up meetings may be scheduled to assess improvement and adjust goals where necessary. Continuous monitoring ensures accountability and supports long-term staff growth (TALIS, 2018).

How Staff Appraisal Influences Motivation

Appraisal, when done effectively, can be a powerful motivator for employees. Ways appraisal can motivate employees are:

Recognition and Feedback: Regular appraisal provides staff with recognition for their achievements and constructive feedback for improvement, boosting their morale and motivation.

Goal Setting and Achievement: Staff appraisal helps staff set realistic goals, work towards achieving them, and experience a sense of accomplishment, which enhances motivation.

Professional Development: Appraisal can identify areas where staff need training or support, providing opportunities for professional growth and development, which can motivate staff to improve their practice (Neo, 2017).

Boost Confidence; Regular feedback and recognition can boost teachers' confidence and motivation.

Improve Job Satisfaction; Staff appraisal can help teachers feel more satisfied with their jobs, leading to increased motivation and engagement

Trust and commitment: Fairness and transparency in the appraisal process can foster trust and commitment among employees, motivating them to work towards the organization's goals.

Offering Rewards and Opportunities: Appraisals that link performance with tangible rewards (e.g., promotions, professional development opportunities, salary increases) provide extrinsic motivation. Teachers are motivated to perform better when they see that their efforts will lead to concrete benefits.

Enhance Autonomy; Staff appraisal can provide teachers with more autonomy and control over their work, leading to increased motivation and job satisfaction (Kumar, 2018).

Informal and Formal Appraisal

(Mathis and Jackson 1982:284) as cited in Peretomode and Peretomode (2023) stated that performance appraisal can occur in two ways, formally and informally.

Informal appraisal is one conducted whenever a superior and subordinate feel it is necessary. This judgement or significant feedback is communicated outside a formal review meeting through conversation on the job, over coffee or by on-the-spot examination of a particular piece of work.

A formal appraisal occurs when the contact between manager and employee formalized and structured and when a system is established to report supervisory impressions and observations of employee performance.

Purposes of Formal Performance Appraisal

Formal performance appraisal can facilitate administrative decisions regarding the following:

1. Promotion of outstanding performance.
2. Means of motivating the employee to achieve higher levels of performance.
3. Employee selection and placement.
4. A hike in employees pay, incentives, etc.
5. Tenure appointment, confirmation of appointment.
6. Establishing objectives for training or development of employees.
7. The value and productivity that employees contribute.
8. How employees develop their own roles.
9. Recognition of an outstanding staff.
10. Justifying merit salary increases or no increases(Peretomode & Peretomode 2023)

Criticisms of Employee Performance Appraisal

1. Judgments on performance are usually subjective and impressionistic no matter how well defined the dimensions of performance appraisal on quantitative goals are.
2. Ratings by different heads, and especially those in different units are usually incomparable.
3. Delay in feedback to employees creates both frustration and anger when good performance is not quickly recognized.
4. Reviews require piles of paper work and could be costly in terms of money, manpower efforts and time invested in it.
5. Distrust of the appraisal can lead to issues between subordinates and supervisors or a situation in which employees merely tailor their input to please their employer (Peretomode and Peretomode 2023).

Common Rater Errors In Appraisal

Common rater errors in appraisal include: the halo effect (generalizing from one positive trait), leniency bias (rating everyone too high), strictness bias (rating everyone too low), central tendency bias (rating everyone as average), recency bias (focusing on recent performance), contrast error (comparing employees to each other instead of standards), and the "similar-to-me" effect (favoring employees similar to the rater).

Key points about these rater errors:

- Halo effect:

When a positive aspect of an employee's performance overshadows other areas, leading to an inflated overall rating.

- Leniency bias:

A tendency to rate most employees at the high end of the scale, regardless of actual performance.

- Strictness bias:

The opposite of leniency, where a rater consistently gives low ratings.

- Central tendency bias:

When a rater avoids extreme ratings and clusters most employees around the middle of the scale.

- Recency bias:

Focusing too much on recent performance, even if it doesn't represent the employee's overall performance throughout the evaluation period.

- Contrast error:

Comparing an employee's performance to other employees rather than to established performance standards.

- "Similar-to-me" effect:

Favoring employees who share similar characteristics (like demographics or personality) with the rater.

How to mitigate rater errors:

1. **Clear performance criteria:** Develop specific and measurable performance expectations for each role.

2. **Regular feedback:** Provide ongoing feedback to employees throughout the evaluation period.
3. **Rater training:** Train managers on how to identify and avoid common rater biases.
4. **Calibration meetings:** Regularly discuss employee ratings with other managers to ensure consistency (Taylor, 2020).

Challenges in Staff Appraisal Systems

1. **Bias and Subjectivity:** One of the primary challenges in staff appraisals is the potential for bias. Evaluators may unconsciously favor certain staff members or overlook performance shortcomings, which can lead to unfair assessments. Bias in appraisals can negatively impact teachers' motivation and job satisfaction.
2. **Inadequate Training and Resources:** Many school leaders lack proper training in conducting staff appraisals, leading to inconsistent evaluations. If teachers perceive appraisals as poorly conducted or unfair, it can lead to demotivation and mistrust in the system.
3. **Resistance to Appraisal Systems:** Some teachers may resist appraisal systems, especially if they view them as punitive or as an additional burden. This resistance can stem from a lack of trust in the process or fear of negative evaluations.

Recommendations

To maximize the benefits of staff appraisal, schools should:

1. **Develop Clear Appraisal Criteria:** Establish transparent and objective appraisal criteria to ensure fairness and consistency.
2. **Provide Regular Feedback:** Offer regular feedback and coaching to staff, rather than relying solely on annual appraisals.
3. **Support Professional Development:** Provide opportunities for staff to engage in professional development, addressing areas identified during appraisal.

By implementing these strategies, schools can create a culture of continuous improvement, where staff feels valued, motivated, and empowered to provide high-quality education.

Conclusion

Staff appraisal is a critical component of school management, and its relation to motivation is undeniable. By recognizing the importance of staff appraisal and addressing its challenges and limitations, schools can create a positive and supportive environment that fosters staff motivation, improves staff performance, and enhances student learning outcomes. Thus, for

staff appraisal to be an effective motivational tool, it should be fair, transparent, and linked to rewards or career progression. Schools should foster a culture of continuous feedback and professional development to maintain high staff morale and performance.

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