

Impact of Performance Management System in the Educational Sector of Pakistan: A Case Study on the Performance Evaluation Process of Dominican Convent Higher Secondary School

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Abstract

This investigative study analyzes the Performance Management System (PMS) of Dominican Convent Higher Secondary School (DCS) in Pakistan. In this research, traditional methods of PMS and the theoretical basis of PMS are also explained. This study explores the problems faced by DCS due to deficiencies in PMS and gives solutions to overcome the deficiencies. Qualitative method is used for data collection and analysis. Open-handed questions were asked in the interview conducted by the supervisors, teachers, and principal of the School. There were 20 respondents. The findings show that teachers and supervisors were not satisfied with the goal-setting process and evaluation method. Moreover, the PMS of School is not a continuous process. Teachers' and supervisors' performances are not evaluated continuously. The teachers and supervisors are also not satisfied with the promotion basis.

Keywords: performance evaluation; graphic rating scale; management by objectives

Introduction

In Pakistan, Performance Management System (PMS) in education sector is comparatively new concept. PM is the constant process which identifies, evaluates and improves the performance of teams and individuals. Moreover, PMS also aligns the individual goals with the organizational goals. In this global epoch performance management is considered as the essential element of success. As Ozga (2003) says that policy- maker considers PM as an important approach which helps in rising level of attainment, increasing accountability of teachers and improving education system.

The PM of any organization helps the organization to explore the weaknesses of employees and recommend ways toward development. According to Junejo, Umrai & Raza (2010) PM is a process that maintains and ensures the performance of employees in an organization and it is one of the essential tool of HRM. For any organization, PMS perform diverse roles. It describes the achievement of the organization and the individual and helps in identifying different gaps and gives suggestions to improve the identified gaps. There are five roles of PM described by Santos et al, (2007). The details of these roles are;

- Evaluate performance- PM supervises improvement and evaluate performance.
- Management of Strategy- PM helps in planning, formulation of strategy, implementation of strategy.
- Reward and compensation- PM helps in compensating or rewarding employees and managing relations.
- Communication- PM helps in external and internal communication, agreement with rules and regulations and benchmarking.
- Development and Learning- PM in any organization provides feedback and provides opportunities for learning and development.

The intention of this research is to analyze the PMS of Dominican Convent Higher Secondary School, explore problems faced by the School due to deficiencies in PMS and give suggestions to overcome these deficiencies. Dominican Convent Higher Secondary School is the well-known School in Pakistan. It was established in 1958 and began as a middle school. After two years of establishment, the School became high School and in 2003 the School became higher secondary School. The School is having more than 100 staff members (teaching + non-teaching staff). Because of School's farsighted leadership and experienced, highly qualified, dedicated staff, Dominican Convent Higher Secondary School has received the Best Institute Award three times. Dominican Convent Higher Secondary School is using traditional PMS. Current research helps in exploring the problems related to PMS of School and give solutions to resolve the problems. There are two parts of the research. The first part is literature review part which explains the traditional methods of PMS and the second part is about the case study of DCS in which problems related to PMS of School are explored and suggestions are given to implement new PMS in the School

Literature Review

Employee performance is important for every organization as employee working mode and work are the two factors that lead to 'organization's success. Employee performance is associated with completing the work and achieving desired results. In this perspective Otley (1999) defined performance as, "*completing the work as well as achieving the desired outcomes*". Performance management is an approach of maintaining records intended to check the work mode, work rapidity of employees in order to know about the ongoing activities of the organization. Moreover, Fowler (1990) describes performance management as a system of managing day-to-day activities. Before evolution of performance management system following traditional approaches or methods were adopted.

Graphic rating scale method

Donald Paterson introduced graphic rating scale method in 1922. In this method, the performance of employee is evaluated by considering his or her personal as well as professional characteristics. According to Stafyarakis & Eldridge (2002) personal and professional characteristic include communication skills, loyalty & dependability, creativity and leadership skills. Greer (2001) criticizes that this method may not help in developmental counseling and it does not assess behavior. Moreover, Stafyarakis & Eldridge (2002) argued that the primary focus of this method was on personal traits of employees while evaluating their job performance.

Annual confidential report or employee service record

This technique was developed in 1940s and generally used by government organizations. It is an inclusive report prepared annually by the supervisors. Employee duties and their performance in these duties are considered in this report. According to Stafyarakis & Eldridge (2002) the

demerits of this method are: report is kept confidential, no contribution of employee, no feedback about 'one's performance and no opportunities for learning and development.

Management by objective

Peter F. Drucker in his book introduced management by objective in 1954. Odiorne (1965) described management by objectives as a system in which employees as well as managers recognize their objectives. It also describes the responsibilities of each employee and assesses their contribution. Evaluation of strategic objectives for organization, the participation of managers in job development plan, increases motivation of managers by succession plans and salary and review and measure performance are the elements of MBO. Walters (1995) defined MBO as an organized approach which allows managers to identify what is expected from the managers. According to opponents MBO emphasizes on outcomes but do not focus on behavior. In this context, Wehrich & Konntz (2005) argued that MBO is a technique which emphasizes on accomplishing goals and behaviors are ignored.

Performance appraisal

This method of evaluating performance was introduced in 1970s. Abu- Doleh et al, (2007) explained PA as the systematic system that evaluates the individual performance and effectiveness relative to organizational goals. Performance appraisal is important for organizations in several ways like it serves as comparatively more objective basis for making decisions regarding employee promotion, termination or transfer of employees and helps in distinguishing between competent and incompetent workers (Cleveland, Murphy & Williams, 1989). The factor of feedback is being added in this method as compared with ACR and MBO. Managers and subordinates discuss strategic and personal issues once a year. The drawback of this method is that the HR department implements and controls this system for relating pay with performance. This is the cause of de motivation of managers (Gabris, 2001; Aguinis, 2007; Keping, 2000). Moreover, Baron and Armstrong (1998) explained the worst feature of PA and that is PA is not considered an essential method among the other management methods. According to Jenks (1991), organizations may be at risk if PAS is not carried out properly.

Concept of performance management

Experts introduced performance management to overcome the deficiencies of the above mentioned approaches. The activities which guarantee that established goals are being achieved in an efficient and effective manner are included in PMS. Many authors define performance management. According to Armstrong (2006) performance management is the organized process for enhancing performance of organization by evaluating the performance of teams and individuals. While, Dessler (2008) defines performance management as the system that incorporates objective setting, assessment of performance and development into a single method to ensure that the performance of employee is supporting the strategic goals of the company.

Performance management system is essential for proficient management in an organization. The significance of Performance management system described by U.S Department of Interior (1995) as the most important responsibility of managers and rating officials is to manage employee performance throughout the year. Managing performance of employees is more important than managing the resources of finance to achieve desired profits as deficiencies in performance of employee have destructive effect on 'organization's financial resources and achieving desired outcomes. Lockett (1992) mentioned that the purpose of performance management is improving individuals with the abilities for working and required regulations towards the communal significant goals within the framework of organization.

The characteristics of PMS by Armstrong & Baron (1998) are explained below;

- It is a thorough process of evaluating and aligns individual objectives with organizational objectives.
- It assigns performance targets for individuals to achieve the desired objectives.
- A formal evaluation of progress towards these targets is conducted in this method.
- Review process is used to identify the needs of training and improvement in employees.
- In order to improve the effectiveness, it examines the whole process.

The goal of PM in an institute is to identify, measure and improve the performance of individuals. As Stephen & Dorfman (1989) said that the effective performance management system helps in increasing the accuracy of performance of employee and building relationship between potential for reward and performance on tasks.

Theoretical basis for PMS

Motivation theories like expectancy theory and goal setting theory explains the process of performance management. In goal-setting theory specific, measureable, attainable, realistic and time targeted objectives are established and participants in a group have common goal to achieve. Mitchel (1982) explains the concept of goal setting theory in perspective of performance management. He suggests that along with the achievement of specific goals, the challenges faced in achieving those goals, leads to increase performance and motivation level of employees. While in expectancy theory the behavior of individuals changes according to the desired contentment in achieving goals. As Salaman et al, (2005) say that it is believed that performance is influenced by the expectations concerning future events so this theory is related to the concept of PM.

Performance management process

Many authors explains the PMS frameworks (Wehrich and Koontz, 2005; Greer, 2001; Aguinis, 2007). The typical PMS includes:

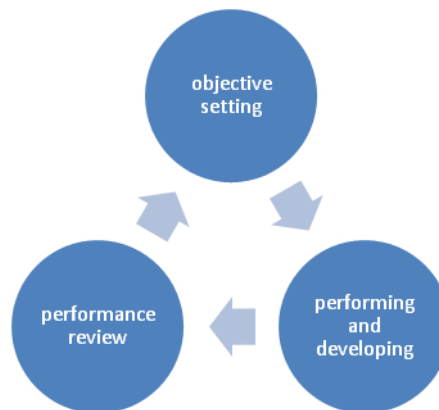


Figure 1: PM Process

Objective setting

Objectives should be smart i.e., specific, measureable, attainable, realistic and time targeting and these smart objectives helps in aligning the individual goals with organizational goals. As Suutari & Tahvanainen (2002) said that individual goals are linked with organizations goals. Objectives help in setting key accountabilities or key result areas of individuals. Clear understand of objectives, key accountabilities or key areas helps the individuals in performing their task in a better way. As Armstrong (2005) said that when individuals are fully aware of organizations goals then the alignment of organizational goals and individuals goals will be easy.

Performing and developing

After setting goals and key result areas and accountabilities, the next step is performance indicators and measures White (1995) described these measures as units produced, finance, standard attainment, innovation, and speed of response and judgment of customers. The next step is competency assessment and operational requirements. In competency assessment there is clarification of expectations of manager. Another important consideration of the framework of PMS is the level of skills needed to attain the objectives to a satisfactory level. The executive plays a significant role in encouraging, training, organizing resources and developmental opportunities, but also in monitoring and if necessary revising performance expectations and objectives (Torrington *et al*, 2005). The most important step of PMS framework is the management of performance throughout the year. As Armstrong (2005) said that the distinctive process of PM is that it emphasizes on continuous process of performance management.

Performance review

Formal assessment is done in this step and it is a key component of any PMS (Redman, 2001). The above mentioned steps are analyzed and performance rating is given to individuals. According to Armstrong (2005), this is the stage of official assessment where performance review over the particular period is done.

Research objectives

- Study theoretical basis and traditional methods of PMS.
- Analyze performance management system of Dominican Convent Higher Secondary School and its influence on performance of teachers.
- Explore the problems faced by Dominican Convent Higher Secondary School due to deficiencies in PMS.
- Give suggestions to put into practice PMS that helps in solving the problems and enhancing 'teacher's performance

Research Methodology

Research Tool

For current research qualitative research method has been adopted. Zikmund (2003) defined qualitative research as the research that helps in addressing the objectives through practices that provide researchers the detailed interpretations without depending on numerical measurements. Case study method, a type of qualitative research, has been adopted for deep analysis of PM of educational institution of Pakistan. For this purpose, semi structured interviews (open handed questions) were conducted from 20 respondents including supervisors, teachers and administrative staff members.

Research strategy

For current research, Dominican Convent Higher Secondary School, a well-known educational institution, has been taken as a case study. Educational institutions play an important role for developing country and are considered important for their growth. DCS is a leading and well known educational institution in Pakistan and is contributing in the growth of a country. But, there is lack of performance management of HR in DCS and this case study helps in exploring the problems related to PMS and give suggestions for proper functioning of PMS.

Data collection and analysis

Dominican Convent Higher Secondary School is a private School and has a hierarchical organizational structure. The School's principal and 4 supervisors are responsible for PMS of

School. The School is using traditional PMS for managing performance of its staff members. While taking interviews from supervisors and teachers, I found many issues that are discussed below.

Setting objectives and discussion of objectives

The School has a clear policy of giving detailed job description to supervisors and teachers. About 90% of the staff members agreed with the statement that they have clear and specific objectives. The issue was with the involvement of senior teachers in goal setting process and discussion of problems related to objectives with the principal. As one of the senior teacher said that;

"We cannot have a dialogue on setting of objectives. Specified goals are being set for us and we have to attain them".

In the same context, another senior supervisor said that;

"I have specific and clear objectives. But when I have to confer my problems (resources or any other matter), I cannot discuss freely with principal".

From the above discussion it shows that supervisors are dissatisfied in goal setting process and there is also lack of communication between supervisors, teachers and principal. Lack of communication affects the performance of teachers and supervisors in a negative way.

Evaluation method

When asked about the evaluation method the senior supervisor told that they get feedback from students to evaluate teachers. So evaluation of teachers by students is the evaluation method of School. 50% of the teachers were not satisfied with the evaluation method. One of the senior teachers said that;

"For most of the students it is just filling the simple forms, but they do not know what will be the impact of their opinion on our performance".

Another senior teacher said that;

"It is unfair to evaluate our performance on the basis of 'student's feedback because students will give good remarks to their favorite teachers and this ultimately will give them excellent marks".

From the above discussion it is clear that teachers are not satisfied with the evaluation process of School. Favoritism and biasness also increases with this evaluation method and this will demotivate teachers.

Promotion basis

Seniority is the basis of promotion in School. As one of the senior supervisor told that;

"Our compensation is not directly linked with our performance. It is linked with our experience".

70% of the teachers were not satisfied with seniority basis for promotions. One of the senior teachers said that;

"Seniority cannot be taken as only basis for giving promotion. Promotion should be given on the performance of particular teacher in certain time period".

From the above discussion it is clear that promotions to teachers are given on seniority basis not on their performance or merit basis. Seniority as a basis of promotion de-motivates teachers and also negatively affects performance of teachers.

Performance evaluation duration

When asked how often performance evaluation is done, senior supervisor told that;

"Our performance evaluation is done once a year".

The same question when asked from a senior teacher she told that;

"Our performance is evaluated after 6 months".

From the above review of supervisors and teachers it is clear that the PMS of School is not a continuous process.

Discussion of performance evaluation and feedback

While taking interviews, I found that teachers hesitate to discuss their disagreements regarding their performance evaluation. As one of the senior teacher said that;

"It is the responsibility of supervisor or principal to discuss performance issues and give positive feedback and guide for efficient performance".

Another teacher said that;

"Due to lack of positive feedback the performance evaluation process implemented in our school fails to create a participative environment".

From the above mentioned teachers' point of view it is indicated that the factor of feedback is missing in School's PMS. Moreover, performance review meetings are also not conducted. Due to lack of feedback there is no participative environment.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From data collection and analysis, it can be concluded that Dominican Convent Higher Secondary School is using old PMS for managing performance of its staff member. Teachers and supervisors are not involved in goal setting process. Senior teachers are not satisfied with the evaluation method of the School. Furthermore, the reward system basis is not appropriate. The promotions are given on seniority basis and in this way teachers are de-motivated. The PMS of the School is not an ongoing process as the evaluation of teachers is done after 6 months and 'supervisor's performances are evaluated after a year. There is lack of communication between supervisors, teachers and principal. Proper feedback is also not given.

To resolve the above mentioned problems, Dominican Convent Higher Secondary School should implement new performance management system with more emphasis on the following points;

- In goal setting process, the School should make sure that the objectives that had been made are able to match with institution needs and teachers learning needs for the betterment of institution as a whole. As Armstrong (2006) recommends that human resources should have understanding of the expectations of their company. Later on 'organization's responsibility is to combine the individual needs with the organizational needs and in this way individual realizes his/her performance is contributing in the success or failure of organization. For this

purpose, the School's evaluator should have discussions with teachers about resource or any other problem related to goal setting process. In this way there will be involvement of teachers in goal setting process.

- The School's principal and supervisors should use the evaluation method that evaluates the performance of teachers on merit basis. In this way biasness and favoritism can be reduced in the institution. This can be done by implementing various methods of performance evaluation like rating or ranking method. Moreover 360 degree feedback may also be used to evaluate the performance of teachers.
- The PMS of School should be an ongoing process. Supervisors and teachers should be evaluated after every month so PMS of the School identifies training needs.
- The major problem in PMS of the School is lack of communication between supervisors, principal and teachers. PM emphasis on communication and agreement of both parties on general objectives. The School's principal should discuss performance agreement with each teacher and supervisor individually. For this purpose the School's principal should arrange 4 to 5 meetings and in this way participative environment will be created.
- Performance review meetings should be conducted so that the issues related to performance evaluation can be discussed. The performance review meetings should identify what teachers have done well and poorly and give feedback accordingly. In performance review meetings the evaluator should also guide teachers for efficient performance.

In this research the problems related to PMS of Dominican Convent Higher Secondary School are explored and solutions are given to implement an effective PMS. It will provide guidance to other educational institutions of Pakistan to resolve the problems related to their performance evaluation process.

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