An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Employee Performance Evaluation System at Leeds International School Network

Priyanga Anuradha Senadheera
Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

Abstract: Performance evaluation is an important component of the human resource management and it is widely used method to evaluate the employees in an effective manner. It is needed to recognize and reward the performance of the employees to improve their commitment and satisfaction. The main purpose of this study was to identify the strengths and the weaknesses of the current performance evaluation system of the Leeds International School to recommend a suitable performance evaluation system. The success of educational organization is dependent upon the quality, commitment and performance of the people who work. Effective performance appraisal is one system aimed at improving teachers’ performance. Therefore, it can be drawn that the company’s existing performance evaluation system has some shortcomings and further improvement is required to improve the effectiveness of the system. The researcher has given some recommendation to improve the level of the effectiveness of the existing performance evaluation system.

Keywords: Performance evaluation, Effectiveness

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the issue

Performance Appraisal is defined as the systematic process of identifying, measuring, influencing and developing job performance of the employees in the organization in relation to the set norms and standards for a particular period of time in order to achieve various purposes [17] When we consider the private education system in Sri Lanka, most of the Principals, Vice Principals and Sectional Heads in the School Network are retired principals from the public sector. Their qualifications range from Masters of Education, Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) and first degree. Some of them have Sri Lanka Education Service (SLES grade III) and specialized in the discipline of education, but not specialized in the discipline of Human Resource Management. However, they conduct school administration systems efficiently and effectively, even though they do not have adequate experience in performance management and performance appraisal. At the same time teachers also often have a little awareness of performance appraisal and its benefits.

1.2 Introduction of the issue

It is understood that majority of the principals and the sectional heads of the international schools are joined from the public sector and they do not have proper idea about the performance evaluation and the performance appraisal. In addition, the appraisers check only one or two lessons to appraise the performance. This can be considered as the halo effect. Therefore it is difficult to find a true and fair view of an employee’s performance in such a performance appraisal. Most of the international schools do performance appraisals only once a year. This will not enough to identify the performance of the teachers. One performance appraisal will not give proper idea of the employee and the decision taken on that will affect the good employees and it will affect the outcome of the organization. There can be some favourations to some persons, when they do favourations it will demotivate the talented employees and they will resign from the organization. This will affect the productivity of the organization. Further, wrong performance evaluation will damage the image and the reputation of the organization. The cultural effect also will affect the performance evaluation. This means when the appraisee is an elder, the appraiser will not give a low rate.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The main objectives of this study are as follows:

1. Explore the existing performance appraisal system of the Leeds
international School Network and identify its strengths and weakness (Effectiveness).

2. To provide the suggestions to improve the existing performance evaluation system and recommend suitable performance evaluation system for the Leeds International School.

1.4 Significance of the study

Performance Appraisal and Performance Management are vital requirements for an organization in order to meet its goals and objectives because measurements are important to take effective management decisions. There are interested parties in each and every organization. In order to meet their expectations the following areas should function effectively. Performance Evaluation system can help to achieve the organization success by improving the human resource in the organization. Therefore the effectiveness of the system is very essential for the organization. However, in Sri Lankan context labour productivity of the private sector employees is higher than the government sector.

Leeds International School is a private limited company. The management has introduced the performance evaluation system with the intention of developing their human capital to gain competitive advantage and face the competition successfully. Therefore it is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of the current system in order to sustain the improvement of the organization.

The main factor for success or failure of an organization begins with its employees because employees are the live factor among the other factors of production. Highly competent and loyal employees bring good results to the organization. First of all the organization should think on co-competencies as well as job family competencies and skills. As such this study will help to enhance the quality of the employees’ skills, competencies and sound behaviour in the International School Industry. Skills and the motivation can be improved if there is a good evaluation system at Leeds International School. The second is the internal business process. The Performance Evaluation /Appraisal system will help to develop other policies and procedures which may help to reduce the cycle of time and save the energy of competent employees.

1.5 Limitation of the study

The study limited to the Leeds International School Network due to lack of information from other sources. Many of the respondents showed a reasonable fear of providing information. Very often data collecting is confined to personal discussion. Therefore it is decided to use purposive sampling method. To collect data, a sample is selected from the population. The findings are based only on the data collected using a questionnaire and the interview held with the manager. This study does not consider all the factors which affect to the effectiveness of the performance evaluation system and it is limited to the conceptual framework. The study was carried out in a single school network so the results can not be generalized.

2. Conceptualization, Operationalization and Research Methodology

2.1 Conceptualization

2.1.1 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

- Objectives of Performance Appraisal
- Policies on Performance Appraisal
- Effective Performance Appraisal Criteria and Standard
- Effective Feedback and Interview
- Appropriate Appraiser Training
- Select Methods of Performance Appraisal

Effectiveness of Performance Evaluation System
2.2 Operationalization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Question No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>Clarity Detailed</td>
<td>Q 1,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies</td>
<td>Well defined Written</td>
<td>Q 3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>Specific Practical Simple</td>
<td>Q 5,6,7,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Feedback results</td>
<td>Q 9,10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraiser</td>
<td>Specific</td>
<td>Q11,12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraisal</td>
<td>Error free</td>
<td>Q 13,14,15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3 Research Methodology

This research is an exploratory research. Exploratory research might involve a literature search or conducting focus group interviews. The exploration of new phenomena in this way may help the researcher’s need for better understanding, may test the feasibility of a more extensive study, or determine the best method to be used in a subsequent study.

This research was done as a cross sectional research. Cross sectional research means one-shot or cross-sectional studies are those in which data is gathered once, during a period of days, weeks or months. Many cross-sectional studies are exploratory or descriptive in purpose. They are designed to look at how things are now, without any sense of whether there is a history or trend at work. The questionnaire and the interview were held to achieve the objectives of the study. The unit of analysis was individual and time horizon was 1st of November 2012 to 31st of March 2013.

2.4 Population and Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principals</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectional Heads</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5 Data collection

Quantitative and qualitative techniques were used for data gathering. Two methods of data collection were used for this study.

2.5.1 Primary Data Collection Method

a) Questionnaire with structured questions
b) Interview

2.5.2 Secondary Data Collection Method

Secondary information is collected through the documents available in the schools such as: number of teachers by their qualification, number of teachers by their age, composition of the academic staff and the turnover and the existing performance appraisal form etc.

3. Results and Discussion

When concerning the overall effectiveness of the current system, it shows the low effectiveness to the system.
With the above analysis of the system, it is understood that the overall effectiveness of the PA system shows the low level effectiveness. So the current system should be improved or suitable appraisal method should be introduced to the school. An interview was conducted with the manager of the Leeds International School to gain information to see the effectiveness of the performance evaluation system of the Leeds.

This study was done to check the effectiveness of the performance evaluation system at the Leeds International School. The sample was collected from eight principals, eight deputy principals, eight sectional heads and eight teachers from eight schools. Even though only eight teachers were selected the sectional heads and deputy principals too work as teachers by teaching subjects, therefore teachers sample represents the deputy principals and the sectional heads.

Establishing objectives is very important to have a better performance evaluation system. Objectives mean desired results expected to be achieved during a limited time period. Features of the objectives should be set under the acronym SMART. That means objectives should be specific, achievable, measurable, realistic and the time bound. Further these objectives should be clear, achievable and understandable. However, according to the findings of the Leeds International School, objectives set are not up to the standard as they are not much clear and not properly publicized. Therefore the Leeds should implement good objectives with the help of HR experts. There should be objectives such as to ascertain the current level of job performance of each employee, to ascertain strengths and weaknesses of employees, to identify training needs of each employee so as to improve each employee’s job performance, to ascertain potential performance and development needs so as to develop the employee for future performance, to provide fair and objective rationale in order to reward the employee. Then performance evaluation system will be more effective at the Leeds International School.

The policies on performance evaluation at the Leeds International School are not well defined. In order to conduct proper Employee Performance Appraisal well defined policy guidelines are a vital requirement. “Policies are guidelines to think and action [9]. Mathis and Jackson (1985) defined policies as general guidelines that regulate organization actions. The purpose of a policy is to provide direction [9]. Any organization attempting to do proper Employee Performance Appraisal system needs to develop clear and appropriate policies in respect of various issues such as:

- On whom should Performance Appraisal be done?
- When should be done?
- Who should do Employees Performance Evaluation?
• How often should Performance Evaluation be done?
• Which areas are to be evaluated?

When compare the respondent’s expressions and the manager’s views the variables used to measure the performance it was deemed to be inadequate to obtain identify the talents and capabilities of the employee. A large weightage has been given to the behavioral criteria. Therefore it is needed to extend and improve the criteria use and to introduce more comprehensive format and criteria for better performance. In order to assess a teacher’s performance following are expected; teaching method, students’ assessment, extracurricular activities, professional development, customer relation, teamwork, honesty, trustworthiness, loyalty, discipline, attendance, punctuality, achievements etc. All together create a good teacher but a single criterion cannot identify an effective teacher. In addition to this, criteria can be divided into three categories as Traits, Behavior and Results. The Leeds should consider the result dimension too because it considers what the individual achieved, actual job output, business result, objectives achieved, QQCT quality/quantity/cost/timelines.

So it is understood that PA process should be carried out within the reasonable time interval. As company does not maintain the performance data of the employees, it leads to inaccurate and subjective evaluation. As cited in sullup and Klimberg (2010) research study by Juran (2004) has indicated that cooperation with monthly or quarterly PA assessment produce outstanding performance and got positive feedback from employees about the fairness of the PA system. So the school should keep performance appraisal in each term or at least two times per year because it will motivate the teachers and the standard of the school can be maintained. The current system keeps on one performance evaluation for year and sometimes no performance evaluation for a year. In addition the manager said that they conduct the performance evaluation only once a year. This does not give a good idea on the system and appraisers won’t be able to use it for a positive outcome. It is better if the school has three performance evaluations for a year. In every term they need to have one performance appraisal.

After the performance appraisal is done, there should be a feedback interview, but the Leeds does not conduct the feedback interview regularly, so there is no purpose of conducting a performance evaluation. According to the manager’s view the Leeds does not conduct feedback interviews and the discussions regularly, but he said it should be implemented. That means that they understood the important of this. Performance evaluation interview process should be in three stages as preparation, conduct and follow-up. According to Lee (2005), an effective PA system assures that feedback is provided not only once a year but it should be a continuous process.

Stage I - Preparation: Method, Participants, Place, Date and Time, Intimation, Restudy
Stage II - Conduct: Commencement, Exchange of information, Termination
Stage III - Follow Up : Up Dating, Next profile, Progress, Counseling evaluation

At the end of the performance interview, results are to be discussed with the evaluee and highlight the strengths and weakness and the improvements of the employee by the evaluator. At the same time evaluee also is to be given an opportunity to clarify his/her doubts. Performance evaluation could be done by using tell and sell method, tell and listen, problem solving and mixed method. These methods should be followed by the Leeds International School to have the effective performance appraisal system.

Appraisers in the Leeds International School are principals and deputy principals. They are not given proper training and guidelines to appraise the employees. They are experts in the educational sector not in the human resource field. Therefore they should be given a proper training because performance evaluators are to be trained as he/she performs a vital role in the organization and with the expectation of obtaining expected results. Following methods could be used to train the evaluators as: lecture method, case study method, role playing method, programmed instruction and special course of performance evaluation. Therefore, training to evaluator is essential for the effectiveness of the PA system [4].

Current performance evaluation system has errors such as halo, leniency etc. Appraisal errors can be occurred due to the evaluator biases and lack of skills. Shaikh (1995) explained that rating errors can be occurred due to the “halo effect” (The rater gives an employee in identical training on all traits), “central tendency” (The rater rates employee trait as 'average' to avoid committing himself) and “leniency” (Rater rates most rates as 'above average'). Sometimes considering one factor of the employees the appraiser rates him high or low which lead to the leniency effect. Not only that by considering the recent incident of the employees appraiser rate him high or low. When considering the Leeds appraiser gives high rates to the friends and low rates to the others. Therefore outcome of the performance appraisal at the Leeds is not up to the standard so this may affect the productivity of the organization too. Therefore multiple assessments are a vital requirement. Thus, 360 degree performance appraisal is the best system to the Leeds International School.
Further, when considering the performance appraisal methods, there are two types. They are traditional methods and modern methods. Traditional methods are Graphic rating scale, Checklist, Multiple choice, Critical incidents, Paired comparison, Rank order, Alternative ranking, Forced distribution etc. Modern methods include Self-evaluation, Management by objectives, Behavioral objective scale, Behavioral anchored rating scale, Field review, 360 degrees. The Leeds International Schools mainly use cascade (check list) method to evaluate the performance. Everybody likes to change the existing performance appraisal system and introduce 360 degree performance appraisal methods. It is better to recommend 360 degree performance evaluation methods because 360 degree method is learning oriented method and four parties’ views are considered to take a decision. As such this is an opportunity to introduce Multi rater Assessment and Feedback System (MAFS). This system has been introduced by T.V Rao and widely use in India and the Western world as well.

4. Conclusion

According to the data analysis it was found that existing performance evaluation system is not appropriate and inadequate for a developing organization in the information era, as it is highly traditional and subjective system. As it is highly subjective, and bureaucratic, it can be considered as an obsolete system. Majority of the respondents of the sample has expressed that it is the high time to shift from this traditional system to a new paradigm. Their opinion in this regard was the new system to be objective, unbiased, less bureaucratic and a Multi rater Assessment and Feedback System. Having perused the above modern performance appraisal methods and the requests of the respondents it should be decided to introduce 360 degree performance appraisal system which is highly appropriate for an educational culture, then effectiveness of the system will increase.

5. References


