

Educators' Perceptions Of The Performance Appraisal In Kwazulu-Natal, Durban South

¹Ms P.N. Mkhonza, ²Prof. S. Perumal, ²Dr.Z.E. Cebisa, ²Dr K Perumal
and ²Dr M Williamson

¹KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, Durban South, Phumelela Circuit

²University of KwaZulu-Natal, Westville Campus

Corresponding Author: Ms P.N. Mkhonza

Abstract

This research investigated educators' perceptions of performance appraisal and was conducted in the Umlazi district, Phumelela circuit, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. The study was motivated by challenges experienced by educators when undergoing their performance appraisals. There were several objectives that guided this study. It set out to evaluate the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) which is a tool that is used to appraise educators. This study also examined educators' perceptions of several features of the performance appraisal system such as the relevance of its goals, the way performance is measured and, the feedback and rewards systems used. A quantitative approach and descriptive design was adopted. The sample was drawn from an estimated target population of 1000 educators employed in various schools in the Umlazi district, Phumelela circuit. A total of 150 educators were selected using the cluster sampling technique. Data were collected using self-administered questionnaires. The quantitative results highlight that there was a high level of dissatisfaction with the performance appraisal system used. Educators were dissatisfied with the goals of performance appraisal, the way performance was measured, the feedback system used, and the reward system implemented. It also emerged that IQMS should be revised to cater for the needs of educators. The findings of the study will benefit the South African and KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education in their review and implementation of performance appraisal.

Keywords: Performance Appraisal, Reward System, Integrated Quality Management Systems And Performance Measurement, Educators.

INTRODUCTION

South African educators are faced with problems of performance appraisal. The tool that is being used to undertake the performance appraisals called, the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS), is not fully understood by educators and they do not know how it is supposed to work as a system. This IQMS is a performance management system for school-based educators and it is designed to evaluate their performance levels in order to achieve high levels of school performance. It is important to monitor the extent to which educators are performing in line with their job descriptions in order to improve the level of accountability in schools.

The aim of the study is to examine educators' understanding of the performance appraisal system. More specifically, the study will investigate educators' perceptions of the performance appraisal system as implemented in the Umlazi district, Phumelela circuit, in the south of Durban. The core problem is that the performance appraisal system that is used does not achieve the main aims of performance appraisal. Thus, this study set out to achieve the following objectives: 1) to understand educator's perceptions of how performance appraisal goals are set at Umlazi district, Phumelela circuit, 2)

to determine educators' perceptions of how performance is measured, 3) to ascertain educators' perceptions of the performance feedback system at Umlazi district, Phumelela circuit, and 4) to understand educators' perceptions of the reward system used.

The performance appraisal exercise in the Umlazi district, Phumelela circuit is conducted bi-annually and usually in the months of June and November of each year. There is a process that is followed and it requires that educators begin with self-evaluation before they undertake a peer evaluation of their performance. The performance appraisal team is made up of the educator and a member of school management (usually, the head of department) and both these individuals are responsible for awarding performance scores which are discussed and agreed upon.

This study was motivated by several factors. Firstly, the need for the improvement in the performance of educators. Secondly, the need for the development of educators. Thirdly, to gain insight into the problems experienced in appraising educators in their duties. There is a lack of relevant expertise on how to conduct educators' performance appraisals.

Theoretical Framework

Performance appraisal has been a critical issue for many South African organisations. Performance appraisal can be traced as far back as World War I. WD Scott was credited for coming up with performance appraisal. Formal performance appraisal systems were well established by the mid-1950s, with personality-based systems being widely used. Gillespie *et al.* [1] illustrated the unease surrounding the use of personality-based ratings and advocated a more participative approach and performance based approach. In 1960s the influence of the management by objectives meant that, performance appraisal developed a greater emphasis on goal setting and the assessment of performance related abilities. In the 1970s, appraisal activities became more open to scrutiny. Through the 1980s and 1990s, the concept of performance management came into vogue and provided a more holistic approach to motivation, improving performance and managing human resources [2].

For example, in the UK the school system, performance management is central to efforts to improve standards in teaching both locally and internationally. As illustrated in the following observation: “Performance appraisal is also called performance review, employee rating, performance evaluation and results appraisal” [3].

Performance appraisal is about developing workers through identifying their strengths and weaknesses. It is also used to reward good performance, while encouragement should be given to improve on poor performance. Kirillov, Bondalelov, Li and Svyatitskays [4] described performance appraisal as the ongoing process of evaluating and managing both the behaviour and outcomes in the workplace. Employee performance common to most jobs includes: quantity of output, quality of output, timeliness of output, presence at work and cooperativeness. Performance appraisal has pre-requisites that should be considered before the performance management process is conducted.

Pre-requisites of Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal is a process; hence the necessary documentation is required. Documentation means continuous noting and recording of the performance. It also helps the evaluators to provide proof of the basis of their ratings. Performance appraisal data is documented in the performance appraisal instruments [5]. In the department of education, Umlazi district, Phumelela circuit uses a performance appraisal instrument that has two parts. One part is made up of four performance standards which is for the lesson observation and the other part made up of eight performance standards which relate to aspects for evaluation that fall outside of the classroom [6].

Communication

Communication is one of key success factors in the organisation. Hence, most South African organisations have a significant responsibility of communicating their mission, vision, goals, policies and procedures and expected behaviour with its stakeholders. Communication is an indispensable part of the performance appraisal process [7].

The desired behaviour or the expected results should be communicated to the employees as well as the evaluators. Communication plays an important role in the review of feedback meetings. Open communication motivates employees to actively participate in the appraisal process [2]. According to Sadq [8], communication is a glue that binds various elements, coordinates activities, allows people to work together and produces results. Communication can either be downward communication or upward communication.

Downward communication methods, from management and employees include orientation sessions, bulletin boards, newsletters and an employee handbook. Upward communication methods usually include a suggestion programme, complaints procedures, electronic mail, attitude surveys and open-door meetings. In respect of personal bias, Schleicher, Baumann, Sullivan and Yim [2] explained that performance appraisal is not an easy task, as training should be provided to the appraisers on certain aspects like insights and ideas on rating, documenting appraisals, conducting interviews and such activities. Interpersonal relationships can influence the evaluation and the decisions in the performance appraisal which should be without personal bias to be effective.

Purpose of Performance Appraisal

The main aim behind performance appraisal is to facilitate worker development. Performance appraisal helps the organisations with the information needed so that they can develop effective training programmes. Most importantly, it is done to determine the appropriate compensation and rewards. It can also motivate workers to be efficient. It provides the worker with the feedback on how well he/she is doing [3].

Expectancy theory is described as “A theory that individuals analyse effort performance, performance rewards, and reward personal goals, relationships, and their level of effort depends on the strengths that these relationships can be achieved” [8]. This theory implies three aspects of performance appraisal: 1) performance evaluation, 2) performance leading to organisational rewards, and 2) the attractiveness of the rewards. The following are some of the pre-requisites of performance appraisal which form part

of goal setting or the purpose of performance appraisal.

Goals/Standards

Standards set should be clear, easy to understand, achievable, motivating, time bound and measurable. Goals of performance appraisal should be communicated to the educators so that both educators and management should be on par in their understanding of all aspects of the appraisal. Each participant should be in agreement with performance standards set by the South African Department of Education. Goals, for example, are one of the prerequisites of performance appraisal [8]. Regarding the purpose of objectives, Schleicher, Baumann, Sullivan and Yim [2] stated that an effective performance appraisal system should emphasise individual objectives, organisational objectives and also mutual objectives. Performance should define clearly what task the individual is expected to do to be appraised. The report should indicate how well the individual has completed the task and how his/her performance can further be improved. The appraisal system should also indicate what the reward would be for doing well. Failure to appraise the competencies reduces the effectiveness of the competencies and the managerial performance appraisal programmes. Hence, the appraisal system should also appraise the managerial competencies which in turn should help to identify successful employees.

Educators' Perceptions Concerning the Goals of Performance Appraisal

Educators believe that, the main objective of performance appraisal is to award them scores that will enable them to get a 1% salary increment as cited in the Integrated Quality Management System Training Manual [6]. The Education Department uses an Integrated Quality Management System that has three programmes in place, which aim to enhance and monitor performance within the education system. These programmes are: developmental appraisal, performance measurement, and whole school evaluation.

Requirements of an Effective Performance Appraisal System

The purpose of developmental appraisal is to appraise individual educators in a transparent manner. It aims to determine the strengths and weaknesses of educators. Furthermore, it also aims to draw up programmes for individual development. Schleicher, Baumann, Sullivan and Yim [2] argue that the key elements for any appraisal system are relevance, sensitivity, acceptability, practicality and reliability. These are then the requirements when measuring performance appraisal. Relevance refers to the fact that there should be a link between performance standards of a particular job and organizational goals. This link should be indicated in the performance

appraisal form. Performance standards translate job requirements into levels of acceptable or unacceptable behaviour. Relevance implies updating of job analysis and periodic maintenance of the performance standards and the appraisal system [2].

Sensitivity implies that a performance appraisal system is capable of detecting effectiveness in effective performers. The major concern is the purpose of the rating. For example, "One study found that raters process identical sets of performance appraisal information differently, depending on whether there is to be a merit pay raise, a recommendation for further development, or the retention of a probationary" [2].

Reliability refers to consistency of judgement. Appraisals made by evaluators working independently of one another should agree closely. Records show that supervisors' ratings tend to be more reliable than those made by peers [2]. Performance appraisal programmes that show acceptability must have the support of those who will use them, or else human ingenuity will be used to thwart them. Efficient managers enlist the active support and cooperation of subordinates or teams by making explicit exactly what aspects of job performance they will be evaluated on. Only after managers and subordinates or team members define performance clearly, can we hope for the kind of acceptability and commitment that is needed in performance appraisal [2].

Performance appraisal challenges

Managers may fail to perform the first two steps in performance appraisal for different reasons, including time constraints or a lack of top management guidelines. Some managers may either informally or formally develop performance criteria but not communicate them to employees because they assume that workers should know how important dimensions of their jobs are without being told. The fourth step of performance appraisal is communicating the assessment results to employees. This is the step that gives managers the most problems. One of the most common complaints about performance appraisals is that employees are not told how well or poorly they are performing. Sometimes, the managers are not so keen to give the workers positive feedback, thinking it will generate jealousy among co-workers [4].

In consideration of problems of performance appraisal, Bach and Edwards [9] outlined the following observations relating to problems of performance appraisal. Firstly, a major of preoccupation of the performance appraisal literature has been to view appraisal as a measurement problem, focusing on ways to increase the validity and reliability of the process and to understand the

cognitive biases of the evaluators. Secondly, there is reluctance of managers to be too judgemental, which can result in the error of central tendency in which everybody is rated as average performers. Thirdly, there is the 'halo affect' which is a distortion that arises when one attribute of the individual is used as the basis to rate the overall performance of the person, irrespective of the stated criteria. Thirdly, there is a problem of 'recency biases'. Because managers rarely keep detailed notes about appraisals and are not very precise about rating all the behavioural aspects that they are required to judge performance, there is a tendency to base reviews on the recent past, regardless of how representative it is of the performance over the year.

The study will contribute by closing gaps encountered when conducting performance appraisal. The purpose of performance appraisal is to provide adequate feedback to each person on his/her performance; to serve as basis for modifying or changing behaviour toward more effective working habits; and to develop educators to excel in the performance of their duties. All schools do not have the same resources and many have over crowded classes and do not have libraries, laboratories and computer rooms. Unfortunately, when performance appraisal is undertaken in schools, it does not focus on the good performance of educators. Rather, it concentrates on awarding educators high scores without aligning it with performance, so that they receive a salary increment. This problem is a national problem that is the result of the personnel responsible for appraising educators, lacking the relevant skills and knowledge of what to assess.

The Significance of the Study

The study on educators' perceptions of performance appraisal will be a significant endeavour in the improvement of the performance appraisal system used by the South African Department of Education. It will help this department to develop a performance appraisal system that seeks to address the performance gaps that have been encountered by individuals. The findings of this study will also help educators' by shedding more light on the goals of the performance appraisal system.

The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge as most of the studies on performance appraisal systems have been covered in field of management and human resources management. Hence, the findings of the study will reveal its relevance in the field of education.

Research Methodology

A quantitative research method was used in this study and it involves explaining phenomena by gathering sufficient information that is analysed using calculations, essentially mathematics. Alan [10]

suggested that quantitative research reduces data to statistics. This research is characterised by its capacity to give direct information, which shows the connection between some aspects of social life and the methods which in general generate numbers rather than words as data for analysis.

In Umlazi, there are fifty high schools and fifteen of these schools were selected. The schools that were selected were based in different areas in Umlazi, geographical cluster and are situated in the south of Durban. A probability sampling technique called cluster sampling was used. With reference to sample size, Bhattacharjee [11] defines a sample as a form of carefully choosing a subset of elements from a wide range of the targets and the sample size refers to the total number of people chosen to participate in the study. The sample in this study included post level one (educators), post level two (heads of departments) and post level three (principals). Ten educators were selected from each school. These educators represented the different levels within the school, at least two members of the school management team (SMT) post level 3 or post level 4 and post level 2 and eight members were from post level 1.

These educators were selected in order to compare understanding of performance appraisal by individuals at different levels. The total number of educators that were part of the research was one hundred and fifty. According to Bhattacharjee [11], if you have a population dispersed over a wide geographic region, it may not be feasible to conduct a simple random sample of the entire population. In such case, it may be reasonable to divide the population into "clusters" (usually along geographic boundaries), randomly sample a few clusters, and measure all units within that cluster. As highlighted earlier, this study adopted cluster sampling because it is relevant as the schools were already clustered. The estimated population was 1000 educators and according to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpert [12], if a target population totals 1000, the representative sample size should be between 140 and 150.

Data was collected through the use of self-administered questionnaires. Self-administered questionnaires are a practical way to gather data. They can be targeted to groups of respondents of the researcher's choice and can be easily managed. Self-administered questionnaires allow the researcher to gather information from a large audience. There are minimal costs to administer the survey, as the respondents complete it themselves. Moreover, respondents have more time to complete the survey and control the pace at which they do so, making it easier and more convenient for them to respond.

Both descriptive and inferential statistics was used to analyse the quantitative data. Descriptive analysis measured the mean, median, mode, variance and standard deviation of the relevant data. On the other hand, inferential statistics was used to infer sample results to the entire population. Quantitative data was captured on the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) programme.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents quantitative results analysis discussion. As mentioned earlier on, the results were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The One Sample T test and Chi-square test have been used to draw conclusions from the sample about the entire population.

One Sample T Test

All questions show that there is significant dissatisfaction with the performance goals set by the Government (South African Department of Education) ($M=2.71$, $SD=.994$, $t(149) = -3.616$; $p<.0005$). Jackson, Schuler and Werner [13] mentioned that performance management should define clearly what task the individual is expected to do to be appraised. Educators believe that the main objective of performance appraisal is to award them scores that will enable them to get a 1% increment. Goals of performance appraisal should be communicated to the educators so that both educators and management should be at par in their understanding of all aspects of performance appraisal. Each participant should be in agreement with the performance standards set by the South African Department of Education [14].

There is also dissatisfaction with the way in which performance is measured ($M=2.56$, $SD=1.046$, $t(149) = -5.153$; $p<.0005$). Bell [15] believes that in order for appraisal to be part of a set of strategies by which teachers are to be held accountable, it should provide a context for career or professional development where specific outcomes of a developmental nature can be identified. Bell [15] and Middlewood and Cardno [16] argued that relating performance to pay will lead to teacher appraisal losing its credibility for career development.

The respondents are also dissatisfied with the feedback system used ($M=2.60$, $SD=.990$, $t(149) = -4.949$; $p<.0005$). If negative feedback is not handled correctly, it can lead to poorer rather than better performance in the future [17]. Feedback focuses on behaviour rather than on the person. It involves effective timing and it takes the needs of the receiver into account.

There is dissatisfaction with the improvement plan in place to help develop educators ($M=2.67$, $SD=1.026$, $t(149) = -3.898$; $p<.0005$). The Ministry of Education

has published curriculum policy documents that set out expectations for student learning in each grade and subject area. The problem is that it is not easy to fulfil the learning expectations without adequate resources in our schools. Educators are not satisfied with the performance standards set by the government ($M=2.73$, $SD=.996$, $t(149) = -3.361$; $p<.0005$). They are also not satisfied with the reward system that is used ($M=2.13$, $SD=1.113$, $t(149) = -9.610$; $p<.0005$), the way in which IQMS is used ($M=2.21$, $SD=1.090$, $t(149) = -8.835$; $p<.0005$), and with the one per cent pay progression ($M=1.95$, $SD=1.054$, $t(149) = 12.238$; $p<.0005$). Fletcher [18] avers that performance appraisal helps management to decide which employees qualify for salary adjustment. In education, all educators receive scores that will enable them to get a salary adjustment, which will indicate that educators are performing very well. Naledi Pandor, former Minister of Education raised some concerns about the high scores that educators awarded one another (through unmonitored peer review process). Such scores did not correspond with the performance of schools [19].

Chi-Square Test

The Chi-Square test is test of association and correlation between variables, however, it does not give clear picture about the strength of relationship of those variables [20]. Chi-Square was performed on questions relating to the reward system (which is 1% pay progression) and differences in level of satisfaction amongst various race groups. These various groups consist of Blacks, Indians and Coloureds. It should also be mention that Whites never participated in the study as it was conducted in a predominantly black township. Based on one of the Chi-square interpretation rules, if the probability value (p) is less than or equal to 0.05, there is a statistical significant relationship between those variables [20]. In this instance, the Chi-square (χ^2) test result indicates a p value = .014. This result reveals that there is a statistically significant relationship between pay progression and satisfaction amongst various groups. These variables can be regarded as associated and dependent on each other. However, no conclusion can be drawn regarding the strength of the relationship between these variables.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The insight drawn from the research findings is that the South African and KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education's management has a significant responsibility of addressing performance-related matters at length. There is a need to change the way in which this performance appraisal is being perceived by educators. It emerged that most educators are more concerned about completing it to obtain financial rewards. Educators' salaries are not tied to performance but rather to IQMS scores. A

recent teacher summit concluded that the linking of IQMS with pay progression has “distorted its development purpose and value”. However, this a developmental tool or tool to close the performance gap. It also transpired that there is a lot of misunderstanding regarding the purpose of performance appraisal. Government employees require intensive training on issues pertaining to performance management. The South African and KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education should also look at the option of inviting outside experts to workshop employees in order to avoid bias.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

The study has some limitations. Only high school educators were considered as respondents, such that educators in primary schools and technical vocational and training (TVET) colleges were excluded. Another limitation includes the lack of research conducted about the performance appraisal in the field of education. The researcher had to consult human resources management journal articles. Furthermore, the issue of social desirability was not sufficiently addressed as some questionnaires were completed without thorough reading. The researcher had to request respondents to be honest as their identity and personal information would always remain private and confidential. The study was conducted in the Umlazi district, Phumelela circuit, in the south of Durban, which makes it impossible to generalise the results to the entire education department. Future research will be important by focusing on educators in other circuits and provinces to understand their views on performance appraisal. Further research needs to be done on why educators with honours, masters and doctoral degrees are not rewarded adequately.

CONCLUSION

The study examined educators’ perceptions of the performance appraisal system used by the Department of Education on its educators. These educators were employed in schools in the Umlazi district, Phumelela circuit, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. The results reveal that there were high levels of dissatisfaction with various facets of the performance appraisal system adopted. Participants were not clear about what is expected when it comes to performance. The majority of educators were dissatisfied the way their performance was measured. There were also displeased with the feedback and rewards systems utilised. The IQMS received high levels of criticism from the participants. The results from SPSS also show that there is statistically significant relation between pay progression and level of satisfaction. It is evident that the results, yielded in this research offers interesting insights into the responses by the various population groups in our count. Performance appraisal is extremely critical for

any South African organisation. Hence, this situation places a significant responsibility to department of education officials to address performance appraisal challenges.

REFERENCES

- [1] Gillespie, M.A., Gillespie, J.Z., Sliter, K.A., Colatat, M.C., Nolan, K..P.& Guiont, R.M. An SK BARS System: Ongoing Performance Management with Municipal Police. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091026017738538>. (2018).
- [2] Schleicher, D.J., Baumann, H.M. Sullivan, D.W. & Yim, J. Evaluating the Effectiveness of Performance Management: A 30-year integrative conceptual review. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 104(7), 851-887. (2019).
- [3] Erasmus, B., Rudansky-Kloppers, S. & Strydom, J. Introduction to business management, 10th Edition, Southern Africa: Oxford University Press. (2016).
- [4] Kirillov, A. V., Bondalelov, V. V., Li, N.P., Svyatitskays, S.H. Use of Teachers Ratings for Motivation Management in Higher Education Institution. *Pharmaceutical Sciences and Research: Vol10, Iss. 10, 2628 - 2633*. (2018).
- [5] Umulisa, A., Mbabazize, M. & Shukla, J. Effects of Project Resource Planning Practices on Project Performance of Agaseke Project in Kigali, Rwanda. *International Journal of Business and Management Review* 3 (5), 29-51. (2015).
- [6] Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) Training Manual for Provincial Training Team. South Africa: Van Schalk. (2003).
- [7] Quality Management Systems for Educators Downloaded from: <http://www.qualitymanagement.org> (2003).
- [8] Sadq, Z.M. An Assessment of Measuring and Improving Managing Performance through Rewards at Koya University- Kurdistan Region/Iraq. *Journal of Studies in Management and Planning*, 1(6), pp 280-288. (2015).
- [9] Bach, S. & Edwards, M.R. *Human Resource Management in Transition*, 5th Edition, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd. (2013).
- [10] Alan, P. *Human Resource Management in a Business Context*. 3rd Edition, London: Bedford Row. (2007)
- [11] Bhattacharjee, A. *Social Science Research: Principles, Methods and Practices*, University of South Florida: McGraw-Hill Publishers. (2012).
- [12] De Vos, A.S. Strydom, H., Fouche, C.B., & Delpont, C.S.L. *Research at Grass Roots for the social sciences and human service profession*. 4th Edition. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers. (2011).
- [13] Jackson, S.E., Schuler, R.S. & Werner, S. *Managing Human Resources*, 11th Edition, New York: South-Western, Cengage Learning. (2009).

- [14] Robbins, P. & DeCenzo, D.A. Fundamentals of Human Resource Management. New York: McGraw-Hill. (2007).
- [15] Bell, L. Appraising teachers in schools: A practical guide. London: Routledge. (1998).
- [16] Middlewood, D., & Cardno, C. The significance of teacher performance and its appraisal. In D. Middlewood and C. Cardno (Eds), Managing teacher appraisal and performance: A comparative Approach: London: Routledge/Falmer. (2001).
- [17] Gerber, P.D., Nel, P.S. & Van Dyk P.S. Human Resource Management, 4th Edition, New York: Oxford University Express. (1999).
- [18] Fletcher, C. Appraisal, Feedback and Development. London: Routledge Publishing Company.(2008)
- [19] Daily News, February, 6. Challenges with Integrated Performance Management. (2006).
- [20] Keller, G. Statistics for Management and Economics. (11th ed.), Boston: Cengage Learning. (2018).