



Practices and challenges of employee performance appraisal in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ethiopia

Adeba Hundera, Addis Ababa University School of Commerce, Department of BAIS, Ethiopia

Abstract:

Little research exists that examines the practices and challenges of performance appraisal in developing countries, especially in Ethiopia. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to assess the practices and challenges of performance appraisal in the Ministry of Culture and tourism. The study was employed through descriptive design in which data from employees and management was collected using questionnaires and interviews. The findings indicate that the most common challenges of performance appraisal in the Ministry are: subjectivity, lack of employees' participation in the appraisal process, non-alignment between performance standards and employee's job, lack of ability to evaluate by the evaluators that emanated from halo error, recency error, lack of adequate training, lack of transparency, discussion, and trust between the appraisers and appraisee. The research only focused on the Ministry of Culture and tourism. Thus, an interested researcher would have to include the regional Culture and Tourism bureau by increasing sample size.

Key words: performance, judgment, appraisal

Introduction

Employee's performance appraisal is one of the most important activities of every organization. Because the success & failure of any organization is exceedingly depend up on various resources, among which human resource is the most vital one. The usefulness of performance evaluation as a managerial decision tool depends partly on whether or not the performance appraisal system is able to provide accurate data on employee performance and hence rating accuracy is a critical aspect of the appraisal process. A difficulty of getting

accurate appraisals of employee job behavior is most often attributed to: faults in rating format used, deficiencies in appraisal content, rater resistance to judge others, and the implications of the specific purpose of appraisal for the rater and the ratee (Decotiis & Petit, 1978). Performance Appraisal is a pivotal management technique. It is used in judgmental workforce decisions, such as promotion, demotion, retention, transfer, and pay and for employee development via feedback and training; it also serves the organization as a means for validating selection and hiring procedures, promoting employee-



supervisor understanding, and supporting an organizations culture (Daley, 1992).

Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study was to assess the Performance Appraisal practices that have been employed by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to appraise its employees' performance and challenges associated to it. So as to, compare with some conceptual frame works/ principles of performance appraisal.

Research Design and methodology

The study was conducted by using descriptive research design. The researcher used both qualitative & quantitative approach of data analysis (pluralist approach) to get the advantage of both. The data collected through interview was analyzed by using qualitative analysis and the data collected through questionnaire were analyzed through quantitative techniques. The researcher used primary source of data in addition to reviewing of related literature such as: books, Articles, journals, magazines, bulletins, brochures, and the company's performance evaluation formats.

Sample size

The researcher selected 30% (70) respondents as a sample from the total population of 263 excluding HR managers because they are subjected to in depth office interview. There are 144 male and 119 permanent employees in the ministry. The study sample was

selected by using the above aforementioned sampling techniques. i.e. simple random sampling and purposive sampling.

Interview Results

Besides, the researcher conducted interview with HR Managers of the Ministry Culture and Tourism to clarify the variety of answers given for the same question. Accordingly, they gave their response as follows; obviously, the appraiser and the appraisee interact with each other to accomplish organizational goals. In the evaluation, of course, this interaction can make the supervisor subjective or enhance subjective in evaluation or it may be difficult for the managers to become exactly objective even if, there is some objective criteria.

Concerning the challenges of performance appraisal problems they told the researcher, there are many challenges that arise from different sources. For instance, from employee's side most challenging issue are employees dislike performance appraisal for fear of criticism on their weak side of their job performance, fear that their salaries, promotions, and their destinies with the organization hinge upon the outcomes of these results.

Challenges of performance appraisal from managers' side

It was the response of HR manger of Ministry of Culture and Tourism for the interview questions related to "what are the problems that reside from the side of managers during



performance appraisal”, most managers also dislike providing performance appraisal feedback, as they find that telling employee’s negative news is difficult, awkward, and unpleasant. Another reason for the dislike by managers of performance appraisal is the regularly scheduled times each year for appraisal interviews. The managers feel that it is time consuming and degrade the performance. At the last but not the least, the HR director responded the researcher that “the other source of the problem is the system itself”. There is no well developed evaluation system in the organization because the government proclamation number 515/1999 detected all the organization not to use the previous appraisal method up to the government prepare appraisal methods for the organization. But the ministries developed intra organizational appraisal system by itself. Some of the general appraisal problems in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism pointed out by the HR director of the organization are as follows:

Cultural problem; for example, providing negative feedback is uncommon in the organization which is considered as the culture of the organization.

Pessimistic assumption/lack of confidence on the appraiser by the appraisee; that the employee has a negative connotation for the appraiser before the evaluation result is provided for them and they do not accept the evaluation result. In short there is no trust between the evaluators and the

employees.

Mismatched work assignment; Employees have no chance to demonstrate their skill, ability and necessary knowledge because of improper work assignment. As the researcher tried to conduct interview with different managers, they replied that some employees were assigned to a job that can not fit to their profession and evaluated out of their professional work. That means necessary position is not given for the employee or the principle of right person at the right position is not maintained.

Fear of loss of position; The evaluators fear that if they give good point for their subordinate which is equivalent to their performance the subordinates may take their position. Employees are evaluated without getting necessary materials/support that facilitates their work to accomplish their responsibility as intended.

At the end the researcher informed that as they do not have much more attention for performance appraisal rather for BSC or balanced score card is on the way to be implemented by the ministry (Source, interview 2011).

Conclusion and Recommendation

Fostering/improving individual performance therefore is vital for the success of every organization. Performance appraisal is a common practice in the existence of the organization. Hence, inability to do this has a significant impact on the productivity or even on the existence of



the organization. Besides, failure to conduct performance appraisal will result in failure of the business.

Based on the findings of the study the following conclusions are drawn

The main problem of performance appraisal in the ministry of culture and tourism are subjectivity, lack of employees' participation, non-alignment between performance standards and employees job, lack of ability to evaluate by the evaluators that may emanated from halo error, recency error, etc

Employee performance appraisal is conducted by immediate supervisor of the employees.

There is no transparency; discussion and trust prevailing between appraiser and appraisee.

As the response of the majority indicates the major objectives of the appraisal in the ministry of culture and tourism is for identification of weakness and strength of the employees.

A performance appraisal standard of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism is not appropriate to measure performance and job related behavior of the employees.

Employee has no clear information about when evaluation is conducted, who evaluates them, and criteria against which they will be evaluated.

Both ratees and the raters are a source of the problem in performance evaluation.

There is no employee participation in the performance appraisal process of the

Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

The ministry has not provided adequate training both for the appraisers appraisee which helps the manager to become accurate in evaluation and for appraisee to develop understanding of them concerning the performance appraisal objective or importance.

There is no written policy or guideline to make the performance evaluation more objective.

Recommendations

Up on the findings of the study the researcher forwarded the following recommendations;

The performance appraisal system should be expressed, as far as possible, in terms of a set of principles which people will need to follow. Principles allow for choice, discretion and room for maneuver, which a rigid system does not. For this reason they will be more attractive to professional staffs who value their autonomy.

The objective of appraisal should be made clear to all employees before appraisal takes place and employees should accept it. The objective of the performance appraisal should be inclusive of all dimensions like for promotion, developing training program, salary recommendation, for transfer and the like.

Employees should participate in the development of the appraisal system like in development of employee job expectation and establishment of evaluation standards or development of



appraisal format. Because, if the employees are confident in the fairness of the appraisal process, they are more likely to accept performance ratings, even an adverse one, if they perceive a fair decision making process.

The use of ratings assumes that the rater is reasonably objective and accurate. However, in reality, raters' memories are quite fallible, and raters subscribe to their own sets of likes, dislikes, and expectations about people, which may or may not be valid but as much as possible the raters have to rely on the established standards or criteria to become objective as possible.

Besides, the appraisal standards or criteria should be clear, specific and includes measures of all the dimensions of employee job performance. Thus, it can alleviate the problem of subjectivity and become appropriate for the employees.

Appraisee and appraisers should be given training that allows them to know how to conduct performance evaluation and the objective of evaluation.

Employees' performance and job related behavior should be recorded on the continuous basis to avoid recency error which is basis for the subjectivity in performance evaluation.

The appraisal system should developed in a way that it can enhance trust, transparency, discussion and open communication between the appraiser and appraisee that enable appraisers and appraisee to have a mutual understanding of the nature, purpose,

methods and problems of the appraisal.

The ministry has to have or develop written policy or guideline concerning the responsibility, frequency and approach of performance appraisal in general guideline.

Self-evaluations can increase the effectiveness of the appraisal system and result in a positive impact on an employees' satisfaction with the evaluation and his/her perception of justice and fairness. Thus, it is recommendable if the ministry of culture and tourism establish or initiate self evaluation which encourages the participation of employee in the appraisal process.

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