

THE EXISTING PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PRACTICES OF PRIVATE COMPANIES AND EMPLOYEES PERCEPTION TOWARDS THE ACTION: IN THE CASE OF SOME INSURANCE COMPANIES WOLAITA SODO CITY, SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA

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ABSTRACT

Conducting performance appraisal helps organizations to reward and promote effective performers and identify ineffective performers to developmental programs or other personnel actions that are essential to the effectiveness of Human Resource Management. However, despite these intended goals, performance appraisal seems not to be effective in most cases mainly due to the subjective nature of criteria (standard) of performance, lack of rater understanding of or inadequate training on performance appraisal, which consequently led to the less importance and emphasis attached to it. This study investigated the perception and reactions of employees' towards the overall performance appraisal system as well as its major component parts such as standard setting, appraisal instrument, feedback, and request procedure in private Insurance companies in the Wolita Sodo City with the selected branches. Data were obtained via a questionnaire from 94 participants of four branches (Awash Insurance S.C, Lion Insurance S.C, Nib Insurance S.C and Africa S.C). An interview was also made with 10 key personnel of the companies particularly with employees working as supervisor/manager and Human Resource department. The result of the study indicated that respondents perceived the existing performance appraisal system as a partial/personal and a system which cannot precisely measure their job related performance. In this case, the evaluation criteria of those companies are not job related, not objective, not measure individual physiognomies of the employees. The Insurance companies should use standards which are measurable, impartial, and job related and should adjust their criteria's in order to create the working environment attractive and to increase employees effectiveness.

Key Words: Effectiveness, Human Resource Management, Insurance companies, Employees Perception JEL Codes: O15, G22

I. INTRODUCTION

The authors (Longenecker and Fink 1999) cited a study on high performance organizations that the practice of performance appraisal was cited as one of the top 10 vehicles for creating competitive advantage. Moreover, performance measurement allows the organization to tell the employee something about their rates of growth, their competencies, and their potentials. According to them, formal evaluations are required to justify a wide range of human resource decisions such as pay raises, promotions, demotions, terminations, etc. It is also required to determine employees' training need. Measuring employee performance is a not easy mission of companies because the job demands the immediate supervisors to understand the nature of the job and the sources of information, and the information needs to be collected in a systematic way, and it is provided as a feedback, and integrated into organization's performance management process for use in making compensation, job placement, and training decisions and assignments. However, regardless of its panacea, ineffective appraisal system can bring many problems including low morale, decreased employee productivity, a lessening of an employee's enthusiasm and support for the organization (Rafikul Islam and Shuib bin Mohd Rasad, 2005) and (Thomas Decotiis &Andre Petit, 1978). According to (Thomas Decotiis &Andre Petit, 1978) the efficacy of performance appraisal 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.

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Organizational performance is the synergetic sum total of the performance of all employees in the organization. This is being the fact, employee performance +has to be closely planned, coached, and appraised to ensure that it is in line with the interests of organizations. However, according to (Michel Beer, 1987), it seems that performance appraisal is not given the proper attention by most organizations in the country and is exercised periodically more as a usual practice than as a tool of motivation on the basis of which various administrative and developmental decisions are taken. Without an adequate number of the right sort of people with appropriate training, qualifications and experience, a company cannot do a good job. No matter how fine the building and the equipment, nor how perfect the systems and policies, there is no substitute for an adequate and capable staff (Kennedy, 1969, pp. 17). Customer goodwill is a valuable asset. A bank's employees, through their daily contacts with customers, are the ones who, for the most part, determine the quality of its services and public relations (Kennedy, 1969, pp. 17). Performance appraisal is such a function in HRM aiming at enhancing organizational productivity through provision of information on employees' job-related performances (Lidetu A2017). In this most competitive business environment, the need and significance of effective and efficient performance appraisal practice is not debatable because the feedback comes from performance appraisal provides people a basis to set goals to both evaluate and improve their performance (Latham, 2007). However, according to Greenberg (1986, 2000) cited in Latham and et al (2008) both the provider and recipient of this service frequently dissatisfied with the outcome. A major source of dissatisfaction appears to be the difficulty people have in providing an appraisal that accurately reflects a person's performance over the relevant timeframe (Latham & Mann, 2006). Many sources of this inaccuracy have been documented.

Most organizations performance appraisal practice currently manifests different problems and also such a kind organizations employee usually hates the process as well as the practice. Performance appraisal seems hated by employees and supervisors alike, they intuitively know that it is a game of "let's pretend" yet it continues (Grubb, 2007). As a result the practice of PA may not be able to attain the desired objective, and accepted by the employees. Therefore, by taking into account the presented challenges within the private companies, this study aimed at assessing the perception of employees' towards the existing performance evaluation practices of private insurance industry within the context of Ethiopian environment taking the experience of four of private insurance companies with their branches.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

II.I. HISTORY AND OVERVIEW OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

The history of performance appraisal is quite gone back long. Its roots in the early 20th century can be traced to Taylor's pioneering Time and Motion studies. But this is not very helpful, for the same may be said about almost everything in the field of modern human resources management. As a distinct and formal management procedure used in the evaluation of work performance, appraisal really dates from the time of the Second World War - not more than 60 years ago. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/performance_appraisal.)

Performance appraisal is defined by different scholars with various perspectives and also it is not possible to set with a single definition as well. However, all this definition given by the scholars have some commonalities that are all reflects about evaluations of employees' effort in the organizational goal attainment interaction. Sometimes, performance appraisal is also called performance evaluation, workers evaluation; etc (Denisi & Griffin, 2008, Mathis & Jackson, 2008) Performance appraisal is the specific and formal evaluation of an employee to determine the degree to which the employee is performing his or her job effectively (Denisi & Griffin, 2008, Terry and Franklin ,2003, Maund,2001, Grubb,2007, NCETA*, 2005, ILO. Ashraf and Ali, 2018, Audi and Ali, 2017, Audi and Ali, 2017, Audi et al., 2021, Audi and Ali, 2016, Haider and Ali, 2015, Kassem et el,. 2019, Sajid and Ali, 2018, Sulehri and Ali, 2020, Ali, 2011, Ali, 2015 and Ali, 2018.

II.II. PURPOSES OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Performance evaluation 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, p. 39-49). Performance appraisal serves a number of purposes in organizations. In general terms Performance appraisal has two roles in organization, which are often seen as potentially Conflicting. These are administrative and developmental roles. Performance appraisals can be sometimes conducted for personnel research purposes (Mathis & Jackson, pp. 344). Those who favor formal performance evaluation contend that it serves several purposes, which are essentially extensions of the above two

major roles (Ivancevich & Glueck, 1989, and Robbins, 1996). The following are some of them: Developmental purposes. PA can determine which employees need more training and helps evaluate the results of training programs. It helps the subordinate-supervisor counseling relationship, and encourages supervisors to observe subordinate behavior to help employees.

II.III. FACTORS INFLUENCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

According to Michael Beer (1987) there are three major factors influencing appraisal outcomes. First, the appraisal system can be designed to minimize the negative dynamics causing problems of performance appraisal. The supervisor often has only marginal control over these matters. Second, the ongoing relationship between boss and subordinate will have major influence on the appraisal process and outcome. Third, the interview process itself, the quality of communication between boss and subordinate, can help to minimize problems of performance appraisal.

II.III.I THE APPRAISAL SYSTEM

In order to solve the problem of defensiveness of ratees that resulted as a result of conflict in the goals of performance appraisal, raters should conduct two separate performance appraisal interviews –one focused on evaluation and the other coaching and development. The other solution is choosing appropriate performance data. For instance, using behavioral rating scales and behavior related appraisal techniques may solve this problem.

II.III.II SUPERVISOR-SUBORDINATE RELATIONS

The quality of the appraisal process is dependent on the nature of the day-to-day boss subordinate relationship. In an effective relationship, the supervisor is providing feedback and coaching on an ongoing basis. Thus, the appraisal interview is merely a review of the issues that have already been discussed. On the other hand, if a relationship of mutual trust and supportiveness exists, subordinates are more apt to be open in discussing performance problems and less defensive in response to negative feedback. There are no easy techniques for changing a boss subordinate relationship. It is highly affected by the context with in which the boss and subordinate work, the broader culture of the organization, and the climate of the primary work group will have important influences on boss-subordinate relationship. If the organization culture encourages participative management, open communication, supportiveness accompanied by high standards of performance, a concern for employees, and egalitarianism, it is more likely that these values will characterize.

II.III. THE APPRAISAL INTERVIEW

The best techniques for conducting a particular appraisal interview depend on the mix of objectives pursued and the characteristics of the subordinate. Employees differ in their age, experience, sensitivity about the negative feedback, attitude towards the supervisor, and desire for the influence and control over their destiny. As Norman R.F.Maier (1958) cited in Michael Beer (1987) there are three types of appraisal interviews each with a distinct specific objectives. The differences are important in determining the skills required by the supervisor and the outcomes for employee motivations and supervisor-subordinate relationships. The three methods are termed as: tell-and-sell, tell-and-listen, and problem solving.

II.IV. OVERCOMING THE PROBLEMS OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Just because organizations can encounter problems with performance appraisal should not lead managers to give up the process. Some measures can be taken to overcome most of the problems (particularly those caused due to human errors) identified above. Robbins (1996, pp. 657-658) has suggested the following: Use of multiple criteria. The more complex a job the more criteria, that will need to be identified and evaluated. Only the critical activities, not everything, that lead to high or low performance are the ones that need to be evaluated. Many traits often considered to be related to good performance may, in fact, have little or no performance relationship. For example, individuals who rate high on such traits as loyalty, initiative, courage, reliability, etc., may be poor performers. Conversely, it is possible to find excellent performers who do not score well on such traits. By keeping a diary of specific critical incidents for each employee, evaluations tend to be more accurate (Greenberg, 1986, as cited in Robbins, 1996, pp.657-658). Diaries, for instance, tend to reduce leniency and halo errors because they encourage the evaluator to focus on performance-related behaviors rather than traits. As the number of evaluators increases, the probability of attaining more accurate information increases. Thus, if an employee has had nine supervisors, nine having rated him/her excellent and one poor, one can discount the value of the one poor evaluation. Therefore, by moving employees about within the organization so as to gain a number of evaluations or by using multiple assessors (as provided in 360-degree appraisals), the probability of achieving more valid and reliable evaluations can be

increased. Evaluate selectively. It has been suggested that appraisers should evaluate only those areas in which they have some expertise (Borman, 1974, as cited in Robbins, 1996, pp. 658. If raters make evaluations on only those dimensions on which they are in good position to rate, inter-rater agreement can be increased and evaluation can be made a more valid process. This approach also recognizes that different organizational levels have different orientations toward ratees and observe them in different settings. In general, therefore, it is recommended that appraisers should be as close as possible, in terms of organizational level, to the individual being evaluated. Conversely, the more levels that separate the rater and ratee, the least opportunity the rater has to observe the ratee's behavior and not surprisingly, the greater the possibility for inaccuracies. Train raters. Rater training is an area which has recently shown some promise in improving the effectiveness of performance ratings. Smith (1986, pp. 22-40).

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

As cited by Creswell (2009), the reasons behind to select this research design were: to generalize from a sample to a population so that inferences can be made about some characteristics, attitude, or behavior of the population and the advantages of survey designs, such as the economy of the design and the rapid turnaround in the data collection. In this case Descriptive research design was employed.

III.I. DATA SOURCES AND STUDY AREA

The study was conducted based on the qualitative and quantitative (mixed) research technique to describe the employees' attitude towards the practices of performance evaluation in private insurance companies. For this effective, structured questionnaire were distributed and also structured interview were conducted to the branch managers and some employees.

III.II SAMPLING DESIGN

Since the number of employees is small in this selected companies workers (N=100) becomes (n) that is Census method was used for 100 employees. This helped to reach in to reach conclusion with very easy in the manageable manner.

1.	Awash Insurance S.C	24
2.	Lion Insurance S.C	33
3.	Nib insurance S.C	27
4.	Africa Insurance S.C	26
Total		100

Table 1: Sample determination of the study of the selected private insurance companies

Source from each Company, HRM department

IV. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

To achieve the stated objective of the study, the total population of this study were (N=100) of these the questionnaire have been distributed and from the total distributed questionnaires, about n=94(94%) have been collected and this was acceptable and the data has been analyzed and interview responses were analyzed together with the questionnaires accordingly descriptively by using SPSS software version 21. Based on the data collected from the respondents and the interview conducted, the analysis has been done as follows:

Item	Sex		Marital status	Marital status				
			Married	Unmarrie	ed			
Male	60	63.9	44 32.3	16	60			
Female	34	36.1	14	20	34			
Total	94	100	61.7	38.3	94			

Table 2: Sex and Marital status of the respondents

Source: Compiled from primary data as processed by SPSS

As it has been shown in the table, above, about 63.9% of the respondents were male and the remaining was female. Regarding the marital status of the participants the largest group (61.7) unmarried.

Age category		Years of work experience	experience				
	Frequency	%		Frequency	%		
Under 25	18	19.1	1-4	18	19.1		
25-34	15	16.0	5-9	15	16.0		
35-44	20	21.2	Ten years and above	20	21.2		
45-54	35	37.2		35	37.2		
55 and above	6	6.4		6	6.4		
Total	94			94	100.0		
		100.0					

Table 3: the respondents'	age and number of years worked

Source: Compiled from primary data as processed by SPSS

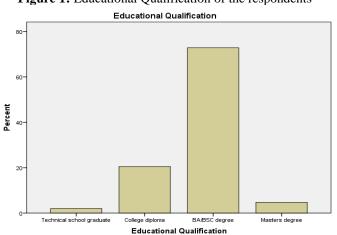


Figure 1: Educational Qualification of the respondents

Source: from SPSS output.

Table 4: Appraisa	l contents and ob	jectives of the	of the companies
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Table 4. Appraisal contents and objectives of the of the companies									
	The purpos	se of	The company	has well	Information	generated	The performance	evaluation	
	performance eva	aluation is	stated standards of		through	through performance		form used to evaluate my	
	to make emp	loyee to	measuring e	mployee	evaluation in yo	evaluation in your company		performance is customized	
Degree of	know about thei	r strength	performance.		is designed to strengthen the		based on the chara	cteristics of	
agreement	and weakness.		I		relationship	between	my Job		
					superiors and sul	bordinates			
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	
Strongly agree	18	19.1	16	17.0	18	19.1	16	17.0	
Agree	15	16.0	11	11.7	15	16.0	11	11.7	
Neutral	20	21.2	18	18.1	20	21.2	18	18.1	
Disagree	35	37.2	38	40.4	35	37.2	38	40.4	
Strongly	C	C 1	1	1 1	6	<i>C</i> 1	1	1.1	
disagree	6	6.4	1	1.1	6	6.4	1	1.1	
Total	94	100.0	94	100.0	94	100.0	94	100	

Source: Compiled from primary data as processed by SPSS

The above table indicates that, about 37.2% of the respondents' response has shown that they have disagreed that the purpose of performance evaluation in their organization was not to make the employee to know about their strength and weakness and following this figure 21.1% of the respondents were neutral. Moreover, 40.4%0 of the opinion of the respondents shows that they disagreed that the organization has well stated standards of measuring employee performance. Again, majority of the respondents 37.2% disagree with the evaluation form with in relation to the characteristics of the job they have been assigned and not yet structured.

	Table 5: Performance appraisal expectation of the employees								
	My rater clearly ex	plains to	My rater reg	ularly explains	The Performance appraisal practice allows me to				
	me what he or she	expects	to me what	t he or she	help set the	help set the performance standards that my			
	from my performan	ce	expects of my	performance	supervisor will	ll use to rate my performance			
Degree of	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%			
agreement									
Strongly agree	11	11.7	18	19.1	11	11.7			
Agree	20	21.3	15	16.0	11	11.7			
Neutral	12	12.8	20	21.2	12	1.8			
Disagree	40	42.6	35	37.2	20	21.3			
Strongly	11	117	6	<i>C</i> 4	40	12.6			
disagree	11	11.7	6	6.4	40	42.6			
Total	94	100.0	94	100.0	94	100.0			

Table 5: Parformance approical expectation of the employees

Source: Compiled from primary data as processed by SPSS

According to the analysis shown in the table above about 42.6% of the respondents disagree with the statement, about their evaluation criteria setting. and 21.3% of the respondents strongly agree with the statement, The Performance appraisal practice allows me to help set the performance standards that my supervisor will use to rate my performance

	I able 6: appraisal feedback and review/appeal procedures								
	My rater/organ gives me fee	0			My rater/organize with me my prog		My rater/organization routinely gives me feedback that is		
	regularly		performance		performance goals performance		important to the things I do at		
Degree of	8 7		appraisal syste	em	goals		work	U	
agreement	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequenc	%	
							У		
Strongly agree	15	16. 0	18	19.1	11	11.7	6	4.4	
Agree	13	13. 8	15	16.0	11	11.7	15	16.0	
Neutral	12	12. 8	20	21.2	12	1.8	20	21.2	
Disagree	23	24. 5	35	37.2	20	21.3	35	37.2	
Strongly disagree	37	39. 4	6	6.4	40	42.6	18	619.1	
Total	94	10 0	94	100	94	100.0	94	100.0	

Table 6. appraisal feedback and review/appeal procedures

Source: Compiled from primary data as processed by SPSS

In terms of the statement` My rater/organization gives me feedback regularly` about 39.4% of the respondents disagreed According to this analysis result and open questions provided to the respondents, the rater/ organization gives the appraisal result to the employees not regularly and right time.

As we can see from above table about 37.2% of the participants were disagree towards to the statement ` My performance rating reflects how much work I do` Furthermore, the statement` I think my organization should change the way they evaluate and rate job performance` about 39.4 % of the respondents has strongly disagreed with the statement. This implies that, the performance evaluation systems of these companies were do not reflect the performance of their employees and the evaluation system has not accepted by their employees and needed to be changed. This goes in line with opinion collected from participants with the open ended question, which shows that the employees/subordinates of the selected companies not satisfied with the existing evaluation system, which was biased with friendship, religious, ethnics and other relative cases and the employees were not evaluated with only to their job requirement.

		Table 7. The evaluation	n system ucc	urucy unu fun nebb		
	• •	e rating reflects how	I think my organization should change the way they evaluate and			
	much work I do		rate job perf	ormance		
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%		
Degree of						
agreement						
Strongly agree	15	16.0	15	16.0		
Agree	18	19.1	13	13.8		
Neutral	16	17.0	12	12.8		
Disagree	35	37.2	23	24.5		
Strongly	10	10.63	37	39.4		
disagree	10	10.05	51	J7. 4		
Total	94	100	94	100.0		

Table 7: The evaluation system accuracy and fairness

Source: Compiled from primary data as processed by SPSS

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It has been shown in the analysis result that, the selected have the evaluation criteria, were not job related, not objective, not measure personal characteristics of employees. Thus unfair in such a ways that it does not have well defined grievance handling procedure and it is not transparent if incase the rates questions for the in accuracy/unfairness of the rating results. The evaluation parameters used were general, which was not specific to the employees' requirements and to the supervisors or other managers. Therefore, lack of employee participants stated their opinion on the open ended question that, the evaluation practices of the organizations done for only formality purpose rather to achieve its intended goal. To sum up, employees of the selected insurance companies have negative perception towards the existing evaluation practices of their companies.

The purpose of performance evaluation is not only for promotion and payment, but according to (Vance, 2006 as cited in Grubb, 2007, Mathis and Jackson, 2008, Denisi and Griffin, 2008) further performance evaluation has purposes, It also may provide the basis for other personnel actions which typically include: (1) performance pay, (2) training and career development, (3) promotion and placement, (4) recognition and rewards, (5) disciplinary actions, and (6) identifying selection criteria. So that, the organizations should look for these stated supplementary purposes of performance evaluation during their implementation process. The organizations should create closely discussion and communication environment between the employee and the raters. As the theory supports here, According to Michael Beer (1987) the quality of the appraisal process is dependent on the nature of the day-to-day boss subordinate relationship. In an effective relationship, the supervisor is providing feedback and coaching on an ongoing basis, not in communication of one way only. The organizations should change their existing way of evaluation which have limitations which leads to subjective judgment in for promotion and other benefits and which creates complain among staffs. Therefore, companies can develop objective criteria's' which helps the employees to be motivated at their workplace and gives them satisfaction and also minimizes evaluators' subjectivity and biasness. In this case, the companies can be effective and efficient at their objectives.

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