

360 Degree Appraisal and Employee Commitment

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ABSTRACT

The paper examined the relationship between 360 degree appraisal and employee commitment. Employee commitment is simply a relationship between employees and organization. The 360 degree performance appraisal as evident from existing literature is one of the appraisal system that has in the recent years gained significant popularity. The paper concludes that employees become committed to an organisation when leaders tend to exhibit behaviours that are geared towards developing them other than largely focusing on pay and promotion. Findings; studies suggests that this traditional appraisal system tends to overlook a number of employee traits due to its standardised nature. The paper recommends that performance appraisal systems should be designed in such a way that they create perceptions of fair treatment relative to other employees as well as the employee's own expectations.

KEYWORD: 360 Degree Appraisal, Self-assessment, Peer Assessment, Immediate Assessment, Employee commitment, Affective, Normative and Continuance Commitment

INTRODUCTION

The most important resources in an organization are workers but are also the most difficult resources to manage due to differences in personality, values, goals, hopes, aspirations, styles and intentions (Echaaobari, Ihunda & Adim, 2018). Employee commitment has been an intriguing subject of discourse between organizational scientists or theorists and practitioners as the benefits of a committed workforce cannot be over emphasized. Meyer and Herscovitch, (2001) assert that commitment is a situation whereby an individual adopts some set of actions to achieve a predetermined goal. The conscious attempts by an individual to start and continue in a path or action in order to actualize or realize pre-determine goals best describes employee commitment. It is birthed when an employee builds some form of psychological bond with their organization (Allen, 1990; O'Reilly, and Chatman (1986) mentioned in Madeeha and Imran, 2016). However, the depth of an employee's emotional and mental attachment to an organization propels him to continually direct his actions towards the attainment to an organizational goals and objectives.

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It is believe that no institution in today's competitive world can perform at the highest levels except each employee is committed to the organization's objectives and works as a valuable team member. It is no longer sufficient to have employees who come to work devotedly every day and do their jobs without help. Employees now have to think like entrepreneurs while working in teams, and have to prove their worth. People are the most important drivers of a company competitive advantage. This means, organizations are reliant upon their human assets to survive and thrive (Mello, 2006).

Subordinate commitment has been defined as the degree to which an employee identifies with the organization and wants to continue actively participating in it (Newstrom and Davies, 2002). For the purpose of this paper, the term subordinate commitment would be used interchangeably with employee commitment. The interest in this topic is due to the fact that employee commitment is vital to contemporary organizational success (Pfeffer, 1998). To remain spirited in the face of these pressures, employee commitment is crucial. Without employee commitment, there can be no improvement in any

area of business activity. Employees will simply treat their work as a ‘9-to-5’ job without any burning desire to accomplish any more than is necessary to remain employed (Maicibi, 2003).

Performance appraisal is a widely discussed concept in the field of performance management. It is used interchangeably as performance evaluation, job performance, performance assessment, performance evaluation as the case may be according to Amah and Gabriel (2017); the importance accorded to performance appraisal systems in part arises from the nature of the current business environment, which is marked by the need to achieve organisational goals as well as remain relevant in intensely competitive markets through superior employee performance (Chen and Eldridge, 2012). Within this context, various studies suggest that organisations can hardly control the behaviour of their employees (Attorney, 2007). The organisations can however control how employees perform their jobs. In addition, performance management research shows that a significant number of employees tend to have the desire to perform their jobs well as part of their individual goals as well as a demonstration of loyalty towards the organisation (Wright & Cheung, 2007). Arguably, the key to ensuring that employees perform well lies in the ability to provide them with the right working environment. Such an environment generally includes fair treatment, offering of support, effective communication and collaboration.

Conferring to Maley (2013) these are the very qualities that are created by an effective performance appraisal system. While focusing on performance appraisal as a motivational tool, studies in this field strongly suggest that performance appraisal systems can be used to enhance motivation (Chen & Eldridge, 2010; Appelbaum, ., Roy, & Gilliland, 2011). However, the link between performance appraisal and employee motivation has often been studied in a traditional or general manner and hence the relationship tends to be blurred in nature. The traditional use of performance appraisal has for instance been criticised for the reward of —win-lose results as opposed to —win-win results in which the system promotes supportive and cooperative behaviour (Rowland & Hall, 2012). Despite the above shortcomings in approaches to performance appraisal, extant literature on performance management still indicates that performance appraisal when undertaken in the right manner can contribute significantly to employee motivation (Tuytens & Devos, 2012). When undertaken in the absence of clear goals, performance appraisal can however have serious ramifications in terms of employee dissatisfaction and

consequently a reduction in productivity and organisational commitment (Maley, 2013). On the positive side, it has been argued that performance appraisal provides an important avenue to recognise employees’ work efforts. Recognition in this case has for long been considered as a key employee incentive. Its importance is underscored by Samarakone (2010) who indicates that human beings in a number of instances prefer negative recognition as opposed to no recognition at all.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Theoretical Foundation

Goal Setting Theory and Feedback Theory

The baseline theory for this paper is anchored on Goal Setting Theory and Feedback Theory. The goal theory was advanced in the 1980s, a time at which motivational theory largely focused on the need for setting goals for employees (David, Song, Hayes and Fredin, 2007). Based on the review of extant literature, the proponents of the goal theory posit that employees record higher levels of motivation when they are presented with explicit goals that they are supposed to meet (Gómez-Minambres, 2012; Catania, 2012). Such goals could include a sales target in the case of sales employees. Bipp and Dam (2014) in a study that supports the goal theory notes that employees will perform at a higher level in the presence of specific and challenging goals.

While the feedback theory on the other hand bears close resemblance to the goal theory. Its proponents posit that just like providing specific goals, provision of feedback helps in clarifying what the employee must do (McCalley, 2006; Pat-El, Tillema, & Sabine, 2012). However, it differs from goal theory in that feedback takes place during and after a given task while goals are set before the commencement of the task (Hon, Wilco and Chan, 2013). Several studies indicate the presence of a positive correlation between feedback and work motivation (Chiang & Jan, 2008; McCalley, 2006). From the explanation given by scholars, it is clear that this theory can be used to determine the relationship between 360 degree appraisal and employee commitment in the organization.

The Concept of 360 Degree Appraisal

The 360 degree performance appraisal as evident from existing literature is one of the appraisal system that has in the recent years gained significant popularity in both small and large-sized firms (Deb, 2009; Lepsinger & Lucia, 2009). By description the 360 degree appraisal system involves an appraisal system that encompasses the views of different groups of reviewers who socialise with the organisation’s employees. Such reviewers include the

employee's superiors (managers and supervisors), co-workers/peers and customers. The process also includes the employee's opinion about him/herself and hence its recognition as a multi-source, multi-rater and full-circle appraisal system (Grund & Przemek, 2012). While on this perspective, Horng Hsu, Liu, Lin and Tsai (2011) through a study on employee competencies identifies four key assessments that should constitute a 360 degree appraisal system. They include self-assessment; immediate supervisor assessment; subordinate assessment and peer assessment. The underlying premise behind the use of 360 degree performance appraisal is that a significant amount of performance data about a given employee can be gathered when multi-sources are used (Sahoo & Mishra, 2012).

Moreover, the 360 degree appraisal systems allows for gathering of information about an individual from different degree and angles. While supporting such views, Deb (2009) underscores that the use of multiple assessment sources helps ensure that an employee's performance is double checked. Moreover, the 360 degree performance appraisal system is considered as one that helps in overcoming disadvantages such as prejudice, subjectivity and halo errors, which characterise traditional evaluation systems (Hsu et al., 2005). Espinilla et al., (2013) for instance notes that the use of this evaluation method makes it unlikely that the employee is criticised solely by the manager. Sahoo and Mishra (2012) add that systems of 360- degree appraisal are perceived by employees as more accurate and more reflective of their performance. They are thus considered as quite effective in providing comprehensive information that can be used to determine the employee's training needs. Despite the effectiveness of 360 degree appraisal systems, several issues have been identified in literature that prevents the effectiveness of such systems. Espinilla et al., (2013) for instance notes that the use of a single type of expression domain such as numerical or linguistic in 360 degree systems limits the ability to gather the richness of information that reviewers provide. In addition, the correct interpretation of final results is hard as quantitative assessment do not always represent qualitative information accurately (Hsu et al., 2005).

Self-Assessment

A number of studies look at the effect of self-assessment on the appraisal process, including formal performance reviews. Involving employees in their performance reviews is increasing as part of a more participative approach to management (Thornton, 1980). Klimoski and Inks (1990) found that supervisors' ratings of a subordinate's performance

were swayed by subordinates' self-assessments, but anticipation of face-to-face feedback did not lead to inflated appraisals. Makiney and Levy (1998) found that supervisors were more likely to incorporate information that conflicted with their own evaluation if that evaluation came from a peer than if it came from the employee him- or herself. Discrepant self-assessment information was not incorporated into the supervisor's final judgment. Self-assessment has been adapted to serve a monitoring or evaluation function in both work sites and training programs (e.g., medical schools). Increasingly, self-assessment is being viewed as an alternative to external monitoring and supervision, and as such, it falls within the context of performance appraisal. Much of the literature on self-assessment for monitoring and evaluation focuses on the validity and reliability of self-assessment. Even though self-raters may systematically under- or overestimate their own performance, such errors may not result in biased estimates of change in performance, such as when used in an on-going performance-monitoring process.

Self-assessment is usually carried out in conjunction with support from or an evaluation by a supervisor. Evaluations by supervisors or even peers have often been used to validate self-assessments, particularly where self-assessment was carried out for monitoring or evaluation purposes. Even where self-assessment is used for learning purposes, it is common to support it with supervisor feedback and validation, which gives employees and/or students a more objective basis for developing future performance goals. In many cases, the employees or students spend time discussing and reconciling their assessment with that of an observer as part of the learning process. Self-assessments that do not include supervisor support generally provide some other form of external support.

Peer Assessment

Probably most methods of peer collaboration could be used in a summative manner. However, it is this assignment of marks that makes summative peer assessment awkward, since individual tutors will have different preferences. The assessment models used have different strengths and weaknesses. The important feature of peer assessment, however, is that it should assess the process of peer collaboration and not simply the product. For example, if a group of students collaborate on a joint report, peer assessment should focus on how well the students collaborated and not simply on the report.

Feedback from different sources, such as mentors, tutors or lecturers can greatly enhance the student learning process. Fellow students, peers, are another source of feedback and peer assessment, the

formative or summative feedback provided by peers, can offer a number of educational benefits. Peer assessment involves students giving feedback to each other to grade their work or performance using relevant criteria.

Peer assessment can be used in a more supportive way, rather than simply enabling students to grade each other. Roberts(2006) refers to peer assessment as a process which allows learners to reflect critically upon the learning of their peers. Peer assessment is also a reciprocal process in that the student providing feedback also benefits from increasing their own understanding. This is achieved by students having to critique and review someone else's work and thereby reflect on their own understanding or performance.

Immediate Supervisor assessment

Supervision represents an organizational duty that promotes professional development, perfecting teaching practice and more learning and success for the student. Being of procedural nature, it has its basis on research-action and it configures ecological, cooperative and formative activities. As such, each teacher can exercise supervision duties, regardless of his/her duties in the organizational structure. Supervision and evaluation are essential and complementary functions, although they present distinctive characteristics (Glickman et al., 2008; Nolan & Hoover, 2004; Pawlas & Oliva, 2007).

In turn, instructors' evaluation is an organizational duty that accomplishes an overall formal assessment of teacher's competence and performance. Evaluation makes sure that each teacher's performance in the system reveals a minimum level of competence, taking into account the student's success.

Instructor's perspective of the overall process of supervision emphasizes cooperative work amongst peers, as well as interpersonal relationships. In the analysis, it also emerges "democratic, open to constructive dialogue and being "available to listen and clarify. Instructors value an atmosphere of trust and mutual responsibility, meeting studies that present a democratic supervision, due to negotiation, regulation and shared expertise between the supervisor and the teacher, three important characteristics of collegial relationship and professional growth (Nolan & Hoover, 2004; Stones, 1984; Vieira, 2009). Nevertheless, teachers do not see supervision as focused, which proves the distance between theory and practice.

Employee Commitment

Meyer and Allen (1991) defined organisational commitment as a psychological state that binds an employee to the organisation. According to Luthans

(2007), organisational commitment is an attitude that reflects the loyalty of employees to their organisation and an ongoing process through which organisational employees express their concern for the organisation and its continued success and wellbeing. Also, Mowday, Porter and Steers (1982) define organisational commitment as the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organisation. Previous research indicates that leadership style, employee's perception of the work environment, interesting work, organisational dependency, and demographics such as age, education, and tenure are antecedents of organisational commitment (Dornstein & Matalon, 1998; Avolio, Zhu, Kho & Bhatia, 2004; Finegan, 2000). Committed employees have no second thought or feeling other than to put in all their best for the success of the organisation. Organisational commitment directly affects the performance of employees which consequently affect the performance of the organisation (Vijayashree & Jagdishchandra, 2011). Tella, Ayeni and Popoola (2007) assert that employees' intentions to perform well, increase their efficiency, and improve their skills can be linked to organisational commitment. The best panacea of employees' turnover is to keep organisational commitment intact (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Literature suggests that organisations benefit greatly from retained employees because they stay to offer their best knowledge, skills, experience, abilities and energy for the organisations' well-being (Yamaguchi, 2013).

According to Akintayo (2010) subordinate commitment can be defined as the degree to which the employee feels devoted to their organization. Ongori (2007) described employee commitment as an effective response to the whole organization and the degree of attachment or loyalty employees feel towards the organization. Zheng, (2010) describes employee commitment as simply employees' attitude to organization. This definition of employee commitment is broad in the sense that employees' attitude encompasses various components. Subordinate commitment seems to be a crucial factor in achieving organizational success. Individuals with low levels of commitment will do only enough to work. They do not put their hearts into the work and mission of the organization. They seem to be more concerned with personal success than with the success of the organization as a whole.

Affective Commitment

Affective commitment refers to the emotional attachment that a subordinate has in an organization (Price, 2011). It is the extent at which subordinates

appreciate to be members of an organization. According to Rhoades (2001), affectively committed subordinates are seen to have a sense of identification and belonging and this motivates them to increase their participation in the activities of an organization. Additionally, affective commitment makes subordinates to have willingness to meet the goals of an organization as well as the desire to stay in the organization.

Allen (1997) cited by Lee (2001) affective commitment is associated with subordinate personal characteristics, organizational features, experiences about the work and job characteristics Muncherji and Dhar (2011) observe that employees become emotionally attached to an organization when they are able to achieve these factors. This is because they help to create an environment that is intrinsically rewarding for the employees.

Normative Commitment

Normative commitment (Bolon, 2006) is the commitment that an employee trusts that they have to the organization or their sensation of commitment to their workplace. Meyer and Allen (1991) supported this type of commitment earlier to Bolon's definition, with their definition of normative being "a sensation of commitment". An employee who is frequently present at work, work overtime i.e. puts in extra hours and more, puts in a full day, have faith in the organizational goals and guard corporate resources is defined by Meyer and Allen (2008) as a committed employee. As a result of its commitment, this type of employee contributes positively to the organization. Creative employees are powerfully trusted and committed as opined by Elio (2013). Williams (2012) assert that an employee may show higher level of commitment if the organization or its management promote his/his academic strides, by being obedient to the employee, such instance as highlighted above is termed normative commitment which is just one type of commitment employees may attach to an organization.

Continuance Commitment

Meyer and Allen (1997), cited by Lee (2010) define continuance commitment as the employee awareness of the costs that are related with departing the organization. This means that continuance commitment is the enthusiasm to remain in an organization due to the personal investments which cannot be transferred. Price (2011) argues that continuance commitment exists when an employee needs the benefits and the salary associated with remaining in an organization. Additionally, it may arise when employees feel that they cannot find

another job or when they believe that they owe their success to the organization.

Findings

In terms of effectiveness, the paper or study finds that the 360 degree performance appraisal system is quite effective in offering a comprehensive analysis of the employees 'performance at Shine Communications. This is consistent with the reviewed literature, which underscores that 360- degree appraisal helps assess an employee's performance from different angles and is therefore reflective of the employee's actual performance (Sahoo & Mishra, 2012). In the case of graphical rating scale, the literature reviewed suggests that this traditional appraisal system tends to overlook a number of employee traits due to its standardised nature (Armstrong, 2009). The study findings however indicate that such as a scale still performs a useful role especially in work tasks that are based on explicit goals and quantifiable in nature (Idowu, 2017)

Conclusion

The paper concludes that employees become committed to an organisation when leaders tend to exhibit behaviours that are geared towards developing them other than largely focusing on pay and promotion. Thus, immediate supervisors should therefore adopt transformational leadership style because it increases employees' organisational commitment without necessarily focusing extensively on intervening with pay and promotion packages.

Recommendations

Based on literature review, we hereby recommend that; Performance appraisal systems should be designed in such a way that they create perceptions of fair treatment relative to other employees as well as the employee's own expectations. This can contribute significantly towards positive attitudes, which have been shown in this study to be a significant determinant of employee's level of motivation and consequently work performance. The study also shows that employees differ in their preference for rewards following a performance appraisal. Organisations should therefore adapt a more personal approach in linking performance appraisal results to rewards and incentives. This could contribute significantly towards boosting of employee motivation as a result of improved levels of satisfaction.

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