

A RESEARCH ON PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL IN TURKEY

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Abstract

Performance appraisal is a very important function and instrument of human resource management. It can provide valuable information for human resource activities such as rewarding, promoting, training and development, selection. When it is developed and implemented properly it can help the organization achieve its objectives developing productive and motivated individuals or teams.

This research investigated the current situations of performance appraisal in Turkey and tested perceived utility, benefit for rewarding and promotion, and accuracy of outcomes of performance appraisal among the statuses of respondents. Outcomes indicate that performance appraisal is not widespread among the firms in Turkey. But respondents believe that performance appraisal contribute to the development of both individuals and organizations. There is a statistically significant difference among the statuses about perceived accuracy of outcomes and perceived benefits for rewarding and promoting.

This study contributes to the body of knowledge on performance appraisal and will benefit human resource professionals.

Keywords: Performance appraisal, Turkish case, perception of performance appraisal

1. Introduction

Performance appraisal (PA) as a concept and a set of practices has become part of a more strategic approach to integrating human resource (HR) activities and business policies (Fletcher, 2001: 473-487). As an important instrument of contemporary human resource management and management approach PA continues to be a subject of interest for academicians and human resource specialists. PA can provide valuable information on human resource activities such as payment, promotion, feedback on the development and assessment of training needs, selection and performance documentation for legal purposes. PA offers much potential for enhancing the effectiveness of HR decisions and for satisfying employees (Taylor et al. 2005: 495-523). PA contributes to firms productivity and quality increase (Bilgin, 2001: 207-220).

An organization can postpone PA but they cannot avoid forever. As Arvey and Faley (1988) stated PA is inevitable for at least three reasons: first, individuals are hired by organizations to perform work needed for the success of the organizations and PA is the way of assessing; second, employees differ concerning how well and how conscientiously they do their work, that's why PA is necessary to recognize the differences in contributions of individuals; third, in some countries formal PA is essential to fire out some individual who have low performance (Ghorpade et al., 1995:32-41).

Main aim of the research to investigate current situation of PA in Turkey and to test if there is a statistical difference among the statuses of respondents about perceived utility, benefit for rewarding and promotion, and accuracy of outcomes of performance appraisal. Survey was carried out in İstanbul in 2011. Questionnaires are used to get data. 746 individuals in 65 firms participated in the survey. The data obtained from the questionnaires was evaluated with a statistical package. Kruskal Wallis H and Mann-Whitney U statistics were used for data analysis.

2. Definition of Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal is defined as “a formal process in an organization whereby each employee is evaluated to determine how he or she is performing” (Cenzo and Robbins, 1996: G6). PA is “any procedure that involves setting

work standards, assessing the employee's actual performance relative to those standards, and providing feedback to the employee with the aim of motivating him or her to eliminate performance deficiencies or to continue to perform" (Dessler, 2008: 336).

PA is one of the most important functions of HR management. It is an action to determine the degree of effectiveness and success of individuals at the work (Bayraktaroğlu, 2008: 103). PA is a step of Performance Management System (Barutcugil 2004:426). Performance management is defined as "a process that consolidates goal setting, performance appraisal, and development into a single system whose aim is to ensure that the employee's performance is supporting company's strategic aims" (Dessler, 2008: 336). In the narrow meaning performance management is a function of human resource management to evaluate, develop and compensate. But in the real meaning it is management by objectives (Barutcugil 2004:426).

As a result one can state that performance appraisal as a part of performance management is a formal management tool or procedure to evaluate work performance.

3. Importance of Performance Appraisal

PA is a comprehensively discussed topic of management research (Grund and Przemek, 2012:2149-2155). Beyond the discussion of academicians or practitioners about effects on organizations or people, personally I think a manager should answer the question about his or her type of management: "how I can identify the people who bring the pitcher and the others who break it?". This sentence is originally Turkish proverb. From this proverb lots of logical questions can be asked: Who work well? Who adds value? Who makes problems? Whose outcome is better? How can you determine wages? Who needs education? ect. I think a "manager" knows the answers. Then the more important questions come. How do you measure? Is your measurement accurate or reliable? I mean weather you use right instrument to measure? If yes, is your measurement accurate or objective? Do you measure the items you want to measure? Moreover, are outcomes of your measurement "job" related? How do you use these outcomes? And do you give feedback to people? All these questions are related to PA, both necessity and how to design an effective PA.

PA is a necessity for both individuals and organizations (Bayraktaroğlu, 2008: 105) PA is an important component of the motivation model: There is a relationship between effort and performance and performance and reward. People need to know that what is expected of them and how their performance will be measured. They must feel confident that a better performance depends on their effort within their capabilities (Cenzo and Robbins, 1996: 321). An effective PA system allows its members to feel that their contribution has contributed to the success of the organization and a desire to add to that success (Boice and Kleiner, 1997: 197-201).

If individual objectives are unclear, if criteria for measuring objectives are vague and if employees do not have confidence that their effort will be an unsatisfactory payoff when their performance objectives are achieved, we can expect them to work considerably below their potential (Cenzo and Robbins, 1996: 322).

Dessler argued that virtually all firms have some formal and informal means of appraising their employees' performance (Dessler, 2008: 336). When we speak about PA we mean formal procedure of appraising. Managers can prefer informal appraisal or they evaluate a part of PA (such as performance forms, grading) as PA, but it is not PA. As Nalbandian stated managers generally believe they know effective employees, even if they can not articulate the reasoning behind their assessment (Nalbandian, 1981: 392-396). So because of false application, incomplete approaches or other misuses as Taylor et al. (2005: 495-523) concluded, performance management systems have failed to realize their potential contribution to organizational effectiveness. Organizations continue to express disappointment in performance appraisal despite advances in appraisal technology.

At the very beginning we have to accept that developing an effective performance system is not an easy task. It need time, money and specialty. But these are not enough. An effective PA process needs many conditions such as training for all partner, top management commitment, motivation, suitable organizational culture and climate, relevant organizational policies, record keeping and even computerized infrastructure ect.

However, measuring success and effectiveness is not easy. This difficulty comes from human factor in the evaluation process and subjective meaning of success (Bayraktaroğlu, 2008: 104). Appraisal effectiveness depends on (minimum) rater errors and biases, (maximum) rating accuracy and (minimum) appraisal reactions (Levy and Williams: 2004: 881-905).

PA is not only HR department's task. But HR department can lead the process. So HR departments of the organizations have to follow the process step by step. Some missing steps or critical issues lessen the effectiveness

of PA. In other word, we can not get the expected results. I think training and feedback are the critical issues (or more important) for an effective PA.

Training all people involved in PA is a major aspect of developing an effective performance system and needs to focus on the process of managing, motivating and evaluating employee performance. Raters should be also evaluated on how they conduct PA (Boice and Kleiner, 1997: 197-201). Most appraisers (supervisor) conduct a formal evaluation because HR department request or mandate it. An appraiser should regard evaluation as an integral part of his or her role. When an appraiser desires to assess, develop, reward, and communicate with employees with his or her inner motivation rather than compliance with a mandate or job description, it is much more likely to produce better outcomes (Nalbandian, 1981: 392-396).

PA process is incomplete without the feedback. The effective positive feedback motivates employees, contributes to improve communications in the organization and integrate employees' personal goals and organizational goals (Shrivastav and Sarpa, 2012: 23-28). Lack of adequate communications between employees and supervisors may be viewed by employees as approval of their current work habits and performance (Boice and Kleiner, 1997: 197-201).

It should be stress that an ideal or standardized performance appraisal can not be imposed for all organizations. In other word PA systems are not generic or easily adapted from one company to another (Boice and Kleiner, 1997: 197-201). Because its scope depends mainly upon the organizational goals, purpose of the appraisal, the skills of the appraisers (Virani, 2012:135-145).

PA is a vital phenomenon for the organizations (Bilgin, 2001: 207-220). The main aim of PA is to raise the motivation and productivity of employees by rewarding better performance (Gizaw, 2010: 1-12). An effective PA offers an excellent opportunity for a supervisor and subordinate to recognize and agree upon individual training and development needs (Shrivastav and Sarpa, 2012: 23-28).

Ultimately, properly developed and implemented PA can help an organization achieve its objectives developing productive employees (Cenzo and Robbins, 1996: 325). As it is known we can not rule if we do not measure.

3. Aim and Method of the Research

Main aim of the research to investigate current situation of PA in Turkey and to test if there is a statistical difference among the statues of respondents about perceived utility, benefit for rewarding and promotion, and accuracy of outcomes of performance appraisal.

Survey was carried out in İstanbul in 2011. 100 firms were selected randomly in the commercial directory without regarding the firms sector. Permission is asked to make survey by mail, but only 65 of them accepted to participate in the survey.

Questionnaires are used to get data. The research questionnaire contains two parts. In the first part some information about the firm is asked. The second part contains performance related questions. Items were generally measured on a categorical scale. Items 8, 9 and 10 are about perception of PA. For these items on the research questionnaire, respondents were given 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree") to record their responses.

Survey's link which can be completed on internet were mailed to firms' HR departments. Each HR department distributed the link to 25 personnel regarding their positions and requested asked them to complete voluntarily. 1500 mails were sent and a total of 746 questionnaires were returned. All were fully completed. Response rate is 49.7%.

The data obtained from the questionnaires was evaluated with a statistical package. Kruskal Wallis H and Mann-Whitney U statistics were used for data analysis.

4. Findings

Some characteristics of respondent firms and their personnel are presented in Table 1. 7 (11%) of 65 firms are defined as family firms. The other are institutionalized private company. 46 (71%) of 65 firms operates in service sector. Positions show the statue of people who works in the firms. 290 (39%) of 746 respondents are employees. 273 (37%) of them are chiefs. 163 (22%) of them are managers. 11 (1.5%) of them are vice general mangers and coordinators. And 9 (1.2%) of them are general managers.

Table 1. Some Characteristics about Firms and Respondents

	N	%
Firm types		
Family firm	7	11
Institutional private company	58	89
Total	65	100
Sector types		
Service	46	71
Production	19	29
Total	65	100
Positions (statues)		
Personnel/employee	290	39
Supervisor/chief	273	37
Manager	163	22
Vice General Manager/Coordinator	11	1,5
General Manager	9	1,2
Total	746	100

How PA is widespread:

Table 2 represents the situation about how PA is widespread in Turkey. 17 firms (26%) of 65 firms haven't yet experienced PA. 25 firms (38%) of them experienced but currently have postponed the application of PA. Only 23 firms (35%) of them currently carry out PA.

Table 2. Widespread of PA in Turkey

	N	%
Postponed	25	38
Carry out	23	35
Not carrying out	17	26
Total	65	100

According to a research (2503 participants, 45% in İstanbul) carried out in Turkey by insankaynaklari.com 44% of firms uses performance appraisal (www.ikyworld.com). Both outcomes show that PA is not widespread in Turkey.

Causes of not carrying out PA:

Table 3 shows the responses of people work in the firms that both have postponed and are not carrying out PA to the question of "why does your firm not carry out or postponed PA". 243 respondents (36%) of 674 have no idea about reasons. 220 respondents (33%) think that PA and its benefits are unknown. 111 respondents (16%) thinks that PA is too difficult to apply. 66 respondents (9.8%) think that the reason is cost. 30 respondents (4.5%) think that the reason is not having HR departments and specialists. A small percent of them thinks that PA is subjective and it destroys the communication among members of the organization.

Table 3. Causes of not Carrying out PA

	N	%
No idea	243	36
PMS and its benefits are unknown	220	33
We do not have HR department	30	4,5
Cost	66	9,8
Not objective and destroys communication	4	0,6
Difficult to apply	111	16
Total	674	100

Term of PA:

Table 4 represents the terms of PA. Annual PA is the most frequently preferred (58%). 15 firms (31%) of 48 firms prefer PA twice a year. 4 firms (8.3%) of them prefer quarterly PA. Only 2.1 % of them prefer monthly PA.

Table 4. PA Terms

	N	%
Monthly	1	2,1
Quarterly	4	8,3
Semiannual	15	31
Annual	28	58
Total	48	100

According to the research carried out by insankaynaklari.com 46% of firms prefer yearly appraisal (www.ikyworld.com). In general PA is carried out formally once or twice a year (Bayraktaroğlu, 2008: 103). Optimum term for PA is in question. One year may be too long for giving feedback to employee and more than twice a year may be stressful for subordinates or appraisees and make overload for managers (Bilgin, 2001: 207-220). But more frequent evaluations have advantages. Frequent reviews eliminate surprises in the appraisal process, allow for clarification and revision of objectives and give managers more opportunity to assure that progress is being made. So employees are better informed to perform their job satisfactorily (Boice and Kleiner, 1997: 197-201).

Methods of PA:

Table 5 shows that competency based PA is the most preferred one (54%). 14 (29%) of 48 firms prefer objective based PA. 5 (10%) of them prefer 369° PA. Only a small percent (6.3%) prefer compositions of competency based and objective based.

Table 5. Method of PA

	N	%
Objective based	14	29
Competency based	26	54
Objective and competency based	3	6,3
360 degree feed back	5	10
Total	48	100

Perceived Utility of PA:

Table 6 reveals that respondents' perceived utility of PA is very high (mean 4.29). 422 (59%) of 746 respondents strongly agree that PA is useful for development of people work in the firm and it contributes the firms outcomes.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics on Perceived Utility of PA

	Frequency	%	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strongly disagree	44	5,9	4,29	1,09
Disagree	16	2,1		
Neither agree nor disagree	57	7,6		
Agree	187	25,1		
Strongly agree	442	59,2		
Total	746	100,0		

According to Kruskal Wallis Test statistics, the results indicate that there is not statistically significant difference among the five positions of respondent about utility of PA ($p= 0.16 > 0.05$).

Test Statistics(a,b)

	Perceived Utility
Chi-Square	6,427
df	4
Asymp. Sig.	,169

a Kruskal Wallis Test

b Grouping Variable: Position

The results indicate that there is not statistically significant difference among those who work for the firms where PA is carried out, those who work for the firms where PA is postponed and those who work for the firms where PA is not carried out. ($p= 0.34 > 0.05$).

Test Statistics (a,b)

	Perceived Utility
Chi-Square	2,160
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	,340

a Kruskal Wallis Test

b Grouping Variable: Situation

Perceived utility of PA is very high in this research. This result is very hopeful for the future of PA in Turkey. But it is contradictory with some researches. For example, according to a research carried out by Watson Wyatt in 2005 in USA only three of ten employees believe that application of PA really increase performance. At the same time, only nearly half of employers believe in contribution of PA to employees' performance (www.ikyworld.com). The research by insankaynaklari.com reveals that 38% of respondents think that performance system is not productive and 43% of them think that performance system does not contribute anything to their personal improvement (www.ikyworld.com).

Perceived Benefit of PA for Rewarding and Promoting:

Table 7 reveals responses of participants about management's approach on taking PA outcomes into account for rewarding (intrinsic and extrinsic) and promoting.

131 (18.6%) of 705 respondents in 48 firms strongly agree or agree that management uses PA outcomes for rewarding and promoting. Most of the respondents are indifferent to agree the statement (62.7%). And the mean value is under the average (2.98). These shows that respondent do not believe that management takes PA outcomes into account for rewarding and promoting.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics on Perceived Benefit PA for Rewarding

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Valid	Strongly disagree	50	6,7	7,1	2,9858	0,87245
	Disagree	82	11,0	11,6		
	Neither agree nor disagree	442	59,2	62,7		
	Agree	90	12,1	12,8		
	Strongly agree	41	5,5	5,8		
	Total	705	94,5	100,0		
Missing	System	41	5,5			
Total		746	100,0			

The results of the analysis indicates that there is a significant difference among the five positions of respondents about perceived benefit of PA for rewarding and promoting ($P=0.001 < 0.01$). Mean ranks decrease as statuses of respondents decrease except statue of employee. This may be resulted from lack of communications or feedbacks among the positions or PA system may works for the benefit of upper statuses.

Ranks

	Position	N	Mean Rank
Perceived rewarding	Employee	284	345,54
	Supervisor/chief	253	339,03
	Manager	150	371,57
	Vice General Manager/Coordinator	11	492,95
	General Manager	7	542,93
	Total	705	

Test Statistics (a,b)

	Perceived rewarding
Chi-Square	18,818
df	4
Asymp. Sig.	,001

a Kruskal Wallis Test

b Grouping Variable: Position

Mann-Whitney U test statistics indicates that there is a significant difference among those who work for the firms where PA is carried out and those who work for the firms where PA is postponed ($p=0.007 < 0.01$). Mean rank of respondents who work for the firms where PA is currently carried out is higher.

Ranks

	Situation	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Perceived rewarding	Postponed	633	347,00	219651,00
	Carried out	72	405,75	29214,00
	Total	705		

Test Statistics(a)

	Rewarding
Mann-Whitney U	18990,000
Wilcoxon W	219651,000
Z	-2,679
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,007

a Grouping Variable: Situation

Perceived Accuracy of PA Outcomes:

Table 8 represents responses of participants in 48 firms about perceived accuracy of PA outcomes. 263 (37.3%) 705 respondents strongly agree or agree about accuracy of PA outcome. 386 (54%) of them are indifferent. 11 (1.6%) of them strongly disagree. Mean value is 3.34. These show that respondents generally believe that outcomes of PA are accurate.

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics on Perceived Accuracy of PA Outcomes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Mean	Std. Deviation
Valid	Strongly disagree	11	1,5	1,6	3,34	0,76
	Disagree	45	6,0	6,4		
	Neither agree nor disagree	386	51,7	54,8		
	Agree	216	29,0	30,6		
	Strongly agree	47	6,3	6,7		
Total		705	94,5	100,0		
Missing	System	41	5,5			
Total			746	100,0		

Kruskal Wallis Test statistics indicates that there is a significant difference among the five positions of respondents about perceived accuracy of PA outcomes ($p=0.005 > 0.01$). But mean ranks decrease as statuses of respondents decrease except statue of employee. This illustrates that those lower statuses less agree on accuracy of PA. This may be result from difference between raters' and appraisees' approach about the accuracy of outcomes. Generally appraisers (manger, supervisor etc) tend to think that their evaluations are just and reflect the realities about appraisees. But subordinates naturally tend to evaluate the outcomes of PA as biased or subjective.

Ranks

	Position	N	Mean Rank
Perceived accuracy	Employee	284	356,03
	Supervisor/chief	253	331,12
	Manager	150	367,86
	Vice General Manager/Coordinator	11	468,41
	General Manager	7	520,86
	Total	705	

Test Statistics (a,b)

	Perceived Accuracy
Chi-Square	14,963
df	4
Asymp. Sig.	,005

a Kruskal Wallis Test

b Grouping Variable: Position

Mann-Whitney U test statistics indicates that there is a significant difference among those who work for the firms where PA is carried out and those who work for the firms where PA is postponed about perceived accuracy of PA outcomes ($p=0.00 < 0.01$). Mean rank of participants who work for the firms where PA is currently carried out is higher.

Ranks

	Situation	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Perceive accuracy	Postponed	633	336,12	212763,00
	carried out	72	501,42	36102,00
	Total	705		

Test Statistics(a)

	Perceived accuracy
Mann-Whitney U	12102,000
Wilcoxon W	212763,000
Z	-7,266
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,000

a Grouping Variable: Situation

5. Result and Implications

These are the findings of this research:

- 1- Only 35% of firms are currently carrying out performance appraisal. That's why one can say that performance appraisal is not widespread in Turkey.
- 2- 33% of respondents think that performance appraisal and its benefits are unknown. 16% of respondents think that performance appraisal is difficult to apply and 9.8% of respondents think that the reason behind not carrying out performance appraisal is cost.
- 3- Annual performance appraisal is the most frequently preferred (58%). 31% of firms prefer semiannual performance appraisal.
- 4- Competency based performance appraisal is the most preferred one (54%). 29% of firms prefer objective based performance appraisal. 10% of firms prefer 360° performance appraisal.
5. 84% of respondents agree that performance appraisal is useful for development of people work in the firm and it contributes the firms' outcomes. There is not statistically significant difference among the five positions of respondents' perception about utility of performance appraisal. There is not statistically significant difference among those who work for the firms where performance appraisal is carried out, those who work the firms where performance appraisal is postponed and those who work the firms where performance appraisal is not carried out.
6. Respondents generally do not believe that management takes performance appraisal outcomes into account for rewarding and promoting. The results of the analysis indicate that there is a significant difference among the five positions of respondents about perceived benefit of performance appraisal for rewarding and promoting. Mean ranks decrease as respondents' statuses decrease. This may be resulted from lack of communications or feedbacks among the positions or performance appraisal system may works for the benefit of upper statuses. There is a significant difference among those who work for the firms where performance appraisal is carried out and those who work for

the firms where performance appraisal is postponed about perceived benefit of performance appraisal for rewarding and promoting.

7. 37.3% respondents strongly agree about accuracy of performance appraisal outcome. But most of respondents are indifferent. There is a significant difference among the five positions of respondent about perceived accuracy of performance appraisal outcomes. But mean ranks decrease as statuses of respondents decrease. This illustrates that those lower statuses less agree on accuracy of performance appraisal outcomes. This may be result from the difference between raters' and appraisees' approach about the accuracy of outcomes. Generally appraisers (manager, supervisor etc) tend to think that their evaluations are just and reflect the situation. But subordinates naturally tend to evaluate the outcomes of performance appraisal as biased or subjective. There is a significant difference among those who work for the firms where performance appraisal is carried out and those who work for the firms where performance appraisal is postponed about perceived accuracy of performance appraisal outcomes. Mean rank of participants who work for the firms where performance appraisal is currently carried out is higher.

Based on the findings and in general following are the implication for managers and policy makers of firms:

- First of all, it should be stress that there is no excellent performance system because of human factor involved in the process. Managers should evaluate performance appraisal as a process. After each trial they should improve appraisal system. They improve system or lessen defects of system with training programs. The solution is not to give up performance appraisal but to make it work.
- At the very beginning management team should define the aim of performance appraisal. Because there are lots of aim expected from performance appraisal written in books, articles or in the mind of each managers and subordinates. An application of performance appraisal in an organization can not meet all the objectives.
- Performance appraisal is not only task of human resource department. It should be integrated into all human resource functions. Without top management commitment it can not be successful like other human resource development projects.
- Performance appraisal is a cultural issue. An effective performance appraisal needs a cultural transformation and cultural transformation takes long time.
- At the very beginning of process performance appraisal can be often met with substantial resistance. Managers should know that some people do not want to be evaluated and generally most of low rated employees think that the results are unjust, subjective biased and not reflecting reality. Management should be decisive for performance appraisal.
- Feed back is very important for effectiveness of performance appraisal. Multisource feedback provide more objectives measures. When used appropriately multisource feedback (i.e. 360° feedback) can make performance appraisal more effective. It depends on mainly organization's culture supporting open and honest communication. But if the computer based performance appraisal system produces a single grade from multisource (i.e. average grade of raters) the manager or any body giving feedback can not defend the grade.
- There have to be an agreement on evaluation criteria to perform the job effectively between appraisers and appraisees. Otherwise parties would disagree about or be disappointed with the quality or validity of performance appraisal.
- Organizations should carefully monitor how their performance appraisal practices are perceived.

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