Towards a Multi-source Performance Appraisal Model in Omani Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

Higher education institutions (HEIs), across the globe, have been increasingly applying staff performance appraisals (PA) to ensure good quality educational outcomes, and to meet the requirements of national and international quality assurance and academic accreditation organizations. Staff at the forefront of PA since they are affected either positively or negatively by the outcome of the process. PA models and the way the process is conducted have long been a controversial issue among both academics and administrators in HEIs. The core of the debate is that PA models and their implementations may not always be sufficiently comprehensive, transparent, and fair enough to accurately and realistically reflect staff performance. Focusing on English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers in an Omani private university, the present study is aimed to investigate EFL teachers' views and perceptions about PA and the implementation practices with a view of providing some recommendations that could help improve the process. Most previous relevant studies in the literature seem to have addressed PA from a theoretical perspective, and there seems to be a lack of empirical studies. In contrast, the present study attempted to explore the issue more empirically, and to this end, the study adopted an exploratory qualitative research methodology with semi-structured interviews being the main method of data collection. Ten EFL teachers took part in the investigation through face-to-face tape-recorded interviews. Results indicated dissatisfaction with the PA system and its implementation, suggesting a number of deficiencies. Participants also questioned the validity of the prime role given to students in the evaluation of teachers in the PA process as well as the lack of effective criteria and transparency in the choice of peer appraisers. Moreover, the lack of communication and training of both appraisers and appraisees were among the major issues reported by the participants. Implications for PA practices improvement and advancement were presented and discussed.

Key words: multi-source model, performance appraisal, qualitative, EFL teachers, Omani HEIs

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