IMPROVING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE THROUGH PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT: A CRITICAL REVIEW

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Abstract

This study aimed at improving school performance through performance management: A critical review. Performance management as a management process is designed to link the organisational objectives with those of individual employees in such a way as to ensure that the individual and corporate objectives are as far as possible met. It is a systematic process of planning work and setting expectations, continually monitoring performance, developing the capacity to perform and periodically rating performance. Performance management involves taking desirable and effective actions that are a critical link between a school's work output and outcomes aimed at facilitating efficiency and effectiveness. Managers must also interact with a variety of colleagues, peers, and co-workers inside the organisation. Understanding attitudinal processes, individual differences, group dynamics, intergroup dynamics, organisation culture, and power and political behaviour can help managers handle such interactions more effectively. This paper was based on library research, where literature regarding performance management was reviewed. Based on KPI's theory, the paper demarcated performance management, explicated the four main stages of performance management, elucidated features of a successful performance management system and finally offered suggestions on how schools can improve their performance by adopting a successful performance management model.

Key terms: Performance management, effective management, performance indicators.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Performance management as a management process is designed to link the organisational objectives with those of individual employees in such a way as to ensure that the individual and corporate objectives are as far as possible met. It is a systematic process of planning work and setting expectations, continually monitoring performance, developing the capacity to perform and periodically rating performance. Performance management involves taking desirable and effective actions that are a critical link between a school's work output and outcomes aimed at facilitating efficiency and effectiveness. The Kenya Ministry of Education conceives performance-based management as the current thinking which emphasises measuring staff performance at all levels. The document proposes that at the beginning of each year, staff will draw work plans specifying the actual target to be met. It will require that all staff, regardless of their position, are accountable for the implementation of agreed work plans. Performance management involves taking desirable and effective actions that serves as a critical link between a school's work output and outcomes aimed at facilitating achievement of efficiency and effectiveness (Blake & Mouton, 1964). There is a strong evidence that where schools and individual teachers are clear about what they expect pupils to achieve, standards rise (Bass, 1985).

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Performance management is a way of helping schools improve by supporting and improving teachers' work, both as individuals and in teams. It sets a framework for teachers and their team leaders to agree on and review priorities and objectives within the overall framework of schools' development plans. It focuses attention on more effective teaching and leadership roles to benefit pupils, teachers and schools. Performance management is a strategic process because it is forward-looking and developmental. It provides a framework in which the school management team can support staff members instead of dictating to them. Its impact on work outcomes will be more significant if it is regarded as transformational rather than as an appraisal process. There is strong evidence that standards rise when schools and individual teachers are clear about what they expect pupils to achieve. It sets a framework for teachers and their team leader to agree and review priorities and objectives within the overall framework of schools' development plans (Burns, 1978).

Major Benefits of Performance Management

1. First, the pupils will benefit because their teachers will have a more sharply focused picture of what is expected, and with encouragement, support and high expectations, their pupils can achieve.

2. Secondly, teachers will benefit. Teachers have the right to expect that their performance will be regularly assessed and that they will have a proper opportunity for professional discussion with their team leader about their work and their professional development.

Four Main Stages in Performance Management

The following are the four stages of performance management (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

1.   Planning performance

Planning 'SMART' objectives, actions and resources, drivers of organisational performance, developing vision and mission statements, developing departmental and school development plans.

2.   Managing Performance

Training and developing staff, adjusting targets, developing tools for measuring performance.

3.   Reviewing performance

Use of performance indicators in schools, inputs, processes and outputs, performance monitoring, performance evaluation, Annual Performance Appraisal.

4.   Rewarding performance

Tangible and non-tangible rewards, recognition, certification, sanctions, tangible and non-tangible rewards, recognition, certification and sanctions.

They want their organizations, work units, or work groups to achieve high levels of performance, no matter what mission, strategies, or goals are being pursued (Blacker & Kennedy, 2003).

Features of a Successful Performance Management System

A successful performance management system has the following salient features.

1. Performance management is closely concerned with the organisational culture and strategically linked to clearly define organisational objectives. Therefore, the performance measure is based on the critical success factors derived directly from the corporate and business strategy.

2. Performance management system is closely linked to other human resource management systems, like planning, succession planning, training and development. Many feel that there should be a separation of appraisal for rewards from appraisal for development.

3. Performance management is a continuous process of monitoring and feedback. There should be involvement of employees through focus group interviews, surveys, etc., in all stages of the design, implementation, and review process.

4. Performance management involves the effective use of technology in conveying desired competencies and monitoring, collecting and giving feedback.

5. Performance management emphasises comprehensive training to managers not only for their development but also to act as effective coaches, as the role of coaching in performance improvement is critical.

6. They want their organizations, work units, or work groups to achieve high levels of performance, no matter what mission, strategies, or goals are being pursued (Blacker and Kennedy, 2003).

7. Performance management is a dynamic system suitable for changing workplace realities, such as working in teams and alternative work arrangements like job sharing, etc.

8. Performance management creates positive goal-oriented task motivation and aims at reducing intra-organizational conflict (Belbin, 1993).

Performance management is an endless spiral, which links several processes, such as performance planning, managing performance throughout the year, and taking stock of employees' performance and potential. Also, it includes recognising and rewarding success at the end of the year. Performance management links these processes in such a way that an individual employee's performance is always oriented towards achieving organisational goals. School Managers are concerned with organisational performance—the accumulated end results of all the organisation's work processes and activities. They want their organisations, work units, or work groups to achieve high levels of performance, no matter what mission, strategies, or goals are being pursued.

Performance management creates positive goal-oriented task motivation and aims at reducing intra-organizational conflict. It is realised that organisations cannot be successful if they do not have a good

performance management system. Each manager needs to devise his/her own system of managing performance. While some norms of performance management are explicit, others are not so clear even to the managers. It is said that standards or expectations that define good performance may be generally understood but are rarely specific. Performance management is a holistic, largely participatory and goal-congruent process of managing and supervising managers at work. It is a systematic, organised approach to managing and rewarding performance by generating and sustaining positive employee motivation. Its salient dimensions include performance standards- representing organisational goals and objectives, employee recognition and reward.

Significant Goals of Performance Management include:
• Alignment of individual and team efforts with organisational goals and objectives.
• Creating a shared vision of the organisation's strategic direction.
• Facilitating discussions on performance expectations, standards and achievements.
• Providing a mechanism for employees to receive regular performance feedback and guidance (Boxwell & Robert, 1994).

Importance of Performance Management to a School
The type and complexity of the performance management system used will most likely depend on the industry, the nature of the work and the size of the business

• Contributes positively to an organisation's goals and objectives as defined in the school's vision and mission.
• Improves employment relationships and communication among all the stakeholders in a school.
• Aligns individual and team performance with organisational values, goals and objectives.
• Helps to maintain high levels of performance and identify areas for improvement in all facets of the school.
• Empowers employees by providing input into goal and objective setting, thus promoting participative management.
• Provides a mechanism to acknowledge exceptional performance and address under-performance
• Identifies learning and development needs.
• Aids in succession planning.
• Provides an avenue for employees to provide feedback on the effectiveness of workplace systems, processes and procedures.
The type and complexity of the performance management system used will most likely depend on the industry, the work's nature and the business's size (Adair, 1973).

Poor Performance
Poor performance generally falls into the following categories:
• Unsatisfactory work performance.
• Breach of workplace policies, rules or procedures.
• Unacceptable behaviour.
• Employee's personal issues that impact their performance and/or others in the workplace.
• Parents, Students and community in general being unhappy with the service in the sector (Bergmann et al., 1999).

3.0 DISCUSSION

Reasons for Employee Poor Performance in schools

Common causes of poor performance may include one or more of the following:

- When staff doesn't know what is expected because goals and standards or workplace policies and consequences are not clear (or have not been set).
- When there is a mismatch between teachers' capabilities and the job they are required to undertake.
- When staff does not have the knowledge or skills to do the job expected of them.
- Lack of personal motivation, low morale in the workplace and/or poor work environment.
- When your employee may have personal problems such as family stress, health problems or substance abuse problems with drugs or alcohol.
- When there are conflicts among the staff.
- When an employee is unprofessionally treated.
- Being late for an appointment.
- Lack of giving feedback, especially on a critical issue.
- Subordinates being ignored by a supervisor.
- Withholding crucial information by the supervisor or colleague.
- Where a Culture of impunity is prevalent.
- Nepotism, tribalism and racism.
- Low morale of supervisors and subordinates.
- Misappropriation of funds.
- Mismanagement of resources.
- Employees are given incorrect information.
- Parents, students and the community, in general, are unhappy with the service in the sector.

Symptoms of Conflict

- Increased tension among members.
- Increased disagreement and complaints.
- Avoidance among members.
- Increased blame game among parties.

Poor performance should be considered promptly, as unaddressed problems have the potential to escalate and are very likely to have a negative effect on morale, productivity and the workplace in general.

Basic Principles of Effective Performance Management.

Quality and effectiveness of Performance management is a reality in organisations only when certain basic and fundamental tenets/ principles or practices of management are followed. These include:

1. **Transparency** – decisions relating to performance improvement and measurement, such as planning, work allocation, guidance and counselling and monitoring, performance review etc., should be effectively communicated to the staff and other members of the organisation.

2. Employee development and empowerment – effective participation of staff (individuals and teams) in the decision–making process and treating them as partners in the enterprise. Recognising staff for their merit, talent and capabilities, rewarding and giving more authority and responsibility, etc., comes under this principle's umbrella.

3. **Values** – fair treatment and ensuring due satisfaction to the stakeholders of the organisation, empathy and trust and treating people as human beings rather than as mere employees form the basic foundation of schools' value system.

4. **Congenial work environment** – the management needs to create a conducive and congenial work culture and climate that would help people to share their experience, knowledge and information to fulfil the employee's aspirations and achieve organisational goals. The staff should be well informed about the organisational mission, objectives, values and the framework for managing and developing individuals and teams for better performance.

5. **External environment** – effective and contextual management of the external environment to overcome the obstacles and impediments in the way of effective managerial performance through doing a SWOT and PESTLE analysis (Astrazeneca,1999).

Features or Characteristics of Effective Performance Management

Performance management is a complex concept that encompasses different dimensions of the organisation and the people. The mission, objectives and goals of the organisation should be well-designed. Performance planning, development and reward systems enable the employees to realise their true potential in order to contribute to organisational growth and development. According to Mondy (1986), the employees' performance and quality are a function of several prerequisites that managers need to take care of.

Prerequisites to Ensure the Effective Practice of Performance Management

1. **Clarity of organisational goals** – the managers need to clearly and precisely lay down the organisational goals and objectives and ensure that these are well informed to the employees and other employees and make them realise what the organisation expects from them. The organisational goals need to be translated into the individual, team and departmental/ divisional goals.

2. **Evaluation** – the individual, team, and department/ divisional performance need to be evaluated on a continuous basis. Therefore, the organisation should develop an evaluation system and process which is designed and developed on scientific lines.

3. **Cooperation but not control** – the managers should nurture the practice of getting work done through the system of obtaining employees' consensus rather than through control or coercion.

4. **Self-management teams** – the management needs to encourage the individual and teams to self-management of their performance. This procedure creates in the employees a sense of responsibility and develops a spirit to work with commitment and evaluate his/her strengths and weaknesses from time to time, and plan for reducing performance gaps.

5. **Leadership development** – the managers need to identify from the existing staff those who have leadership potential and, apart from sincerity and honesty, to ensure better and effective two-way communication between the managers and the employees.

6. **System of feedback** – the organisation must have a fool proof feedback system of staff/individuals/teams/departments' performance. It should be monitored continuously and generate feedback loops for better performance management.

There must be a system that would help to monitor and measure all performance against the set standards, and the employees need to be informed of their shortcomings. The evaluation system should be made transparent so as to repose employees' faith in the system. Managers need to know whether their employees are performing their jobs efficiently and effectively or whether there is a need for improvement.

Evaluating employee performance is part of a performance management system, which is a process of establishing performance standards and appraising employee performance to arrive at objective human resource decisions and provide documentation to support those decisions. Performance appraisal is a critical part of a performance management system (Edward, 2003).

Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators define factors the institution needs to benchmark and monitor. Assessment techniques provide the mechanism for measuring and evaluating the defined factors to evaluate progress or impact. KPIs specify what is measured, and assessment techniques detail how and when it will be measured. KPI is a measure used to define and evaluate an organisation's success. Typically, it is expressed in terms of making progress towards its long-term organisational goals. KPI incorporates information on the sources, calculations and definitions for each measure and sets out the timetable for monthly data submission. KPIs assist an organisation in defining and measuring progress toward organisational goals and objectives. Once an organisation has analysed its mission and defined its goals, it needs to measure progress towards those goals. KPIs provide a measurement tool. KPIs assist an organisation in measuring that it is 'on track' – most often that it is working towards and attaining a beneficial outcome or improvement. In many cases, KPIs are used in projects and to measure service delivery.

There are as many KPIs as ways in which they can be constructed. For example, in an Electronic Document and Records Management (EDRM) project, KPIs could be used to measure client uptake as the system rolls out. Another example is to measure the timeliness and quality of service delivery – in this case, KPIs may be used to measure that records services meet agreed delivery times for correspondence in accordance with a Service Level Agreement (SLA).

KPIs are quantifiable measurements that reflect the critical success factors of a business.

- Key Drivers that have a major impact on the performance of the business.
- A handful of numbers that give the owner an "at a glance "view of the business.
- Keep their finger on the pulse of the business.
- Identify hot spots that need attention.
- Act quickly to drive the business forward.

Key Performance Indicators: Using them effectively

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are just one of the ways of using measurement and evaluation in KM initiatives. They give a much focused view that is most useful for monitoring KM activities for progress in the desired direction. They do not substitute for the other measurement and evaluation activities listed above. Monitoring via KPIs can provide useful inputs to impact evaluation, but unless KM activities have a direct quantitative output, such as sales results or direct cost savings (mostly, they do not), they do not provide sufficient data to evaluate and assess the positive impact of KM. KPIs almost always need to be supplemented with some qualitative analysis to understand the background drivers for the trends and results displayed by the KPIs. It is a particular risk in using KPIs (especially if you do not extend them with impact evaluation techniques) that your KPIs give you an illusion of progress. KPIs typically monitor activities and quantifiable outputs (such as documents created). KPIs can be good at reporting on KM efforts in tangible ways via numbers and trend lines, but they do not substitute for evaluating the performance of KM in terms of positive impact on the business. Counting beans (or documents) alone

does not tell you whether your KM efforts are paying off. So KPIs are not enough, and focusing on them should not distract from the real question, which is one of organisational performance.

Performance Indicators in Education

1. **Academics**
   - **Completion Rate**: This KPI determines the number of students who completed their schooling or received a particular certificate or degree within the normal time frame. (You'll want to ensure you have a policy for tracking transfers in and out of your grades.)
   - **Awards**: This metric looks at the number of awards granted to students each academic calendar year, e.g. awarding them books, pencils etc.
   - **Attendance/absenteeism/retention Rate**: determining learners' rate of attendance, absenteeism or retention rate in a term/year.
   - **Finances**
   - **Percentage of Students on Aid**: This metric calculates the number of students receiving some kind of financial assistance, e.g. HELB loan. In a secondary school, you may also track those on meal assistance.
   - **Grant Money**: It's important to track the money fundraised for an institution through endowments, donations, or partnerships with non-governmental organisations.
   - **Tuition Costs**: This metric examines the cost to each student in a given scholastic timeline (i.e. a quarter or termly) to attend the institution.

2. **Ratios**
   - **Student-to-Teacher Ratio**: Schools may want to examine this metric to ensure students are receiving the proper attention. In most cases, the lower your student-to-teacher ratio is, the better.
   - **Cost per Student**: This metric calculates every cost a school incurs to educate each student. This might include campus and building maintenance, teacher and staff salaries, some books costs, some food costs, and much more, e.g. free primary education, free day secondary education or government sponsorship in university.

3. **Curriculum**
   - **Proficiency Rates for Each Subject**: This allows you to see not just how your curriculum breaks down but how each area of a curriculum is performing.

4. **Facilities**
   - **Average age of buildings**: Renovating older buildings effectively lowers the building's age. Thus, tracking the age of your buildings on campus helps ensure that adequate maintenance is being provided and that they are fully functional.
   - **Percentage of buildings passing inspection**: Of course, this metric should ideally come out at 100 per cent—but if it is lower, you'll know to pay immediate attention to the buildings that did not pass. You could also have an internal inspection for something like the availability of technology.
   - **Classroom utilisation rate**: This metric examines whether you're making the best use of your campus space and keeping classes as full as possible.

5. **Technology**
   - **Percentage of classes using technology**: You'll want a high percentage of classes in your school using the technologies or online platforms that have been provided to them.
   - **Percentage of administrators using technology**: Both teachers and administrators should be using the online- or classroom-based technologies they've been provided for lessons, projects, or activities—and this metric should make you aware of whether that is happening or not.
   - **Social media engagement**: The analytics you'll need for this metric is often available through the social media platforms your school chooses to employ (like Facebook, for example) and can show how well your social media department is performing.
   - **Calls to tech department per month**: This may act as a productivity metric for your IT department, showing them how many calls they're fielded and how many (if any) went unanswered.

6. **Transportation**
   - **Percentage of students that take public transit**: Whether at a junior high or a large university, schools will want to track whether students are using the transportation options that have been provided to them by the institution, municipality, or state.
   - **Percentage of students that commute**: Month-to-month or year-to-year, the admissions office will likely want to track what percentage of student commuters. This is directly tied to how much parking and on-campus housing may be needed.
   - **Cost of Transit**: Tracking your cost per student of busses will allow you to analyse if you have an appropriate bus route or if you need to get creative about getting your students to class. You have the same challenge at a university when looking at the availability of transit options. Having a school transit option might be a good way to encourage attendance.

7. **Housing**
   - **Percentage of students living on campus**: Tracking this rate allows administrators to ensure that there is enough room (or too much room) for students on campus and that this stays in line with the institution's long-term strategy.

Percentage of Students that say on-campus housing is above average: Survey results are always important to keep in consideration. You'll want to ensure that students feel their tuition and fees are being utilised appropriately and that administrators are responding to their feedback accordingly. The quality of housing options certainly affects where students choose to live during college.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions: This study concludes that performance management is a way of helping schools improve by supporting and improving teachers work; both as individuals and in teams. The four main stages of performance management which are planning performance, managing performance, reviewing performance, and rewarding performance are very crucial for performance management to succeed. Similarly, performance management creates positive goal-oriented task motivation and aims at reducing intra-organizational conflict. Finally, performance indicators in Education includes performance in academics, teacher-student ratios, availability of facilities, use of technology, student and teacher transportation and housing among others.

Recommendations: This study recommends that schools should adopt a Performance management system if they intend to improve and support teachers work; both as individuals and in teams. Additionally,

schools should follow the four main stages of performance management which are planning performance, managing performance, reviewing performance, and rewarding performance for them to succeed. Schools should adopt a performance management system for them to have goal-oriented tasks, motivate their staff and reduce intra-organizational conflicts. Schools should gauge their performance through the following indicators; academics, teacher-student ratios, availability of facilities, use of technology, student and teacher transportation and housing among others.

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