

Performance Appraisal and Nursing Profession

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Abstract

Performance appraisal is used for evaluation of technical, professional and management personnel. It is also helpful in predicting future benefits of the employee, organization, and society. In every organization, all employees work to achieve the common goal of the organization. The employees have individual differences. It is necessary to inform them, from time to time about their own level of performance in the organization so that their morale may be high. Objectives of performance appraisal are-determining salary standards, promotion, transfer, demotion, termination, training, communication and informing employees "where they stand. These objectives are achieved by many methods. Performance appraisal of nursing personnel comprises some characteristics. Job descriptions are written according to each job. The appraisal tool used is suitable to the purpose have clear instructions for its use. The evaluators are trained. Performance appraisal is considered to be fair and productive by all. Appraisal should be based on a standard, must know in advance. Appraiser should be someone who has observed the employee's work, the employee trusts, and respects on them. Advantages of performance appraisal are ensuring/enhancing quality nursing care, motivation, job satisfaction, evaluate and improve the manager's own performance, employees can know how well he/she is doing, what their manager thinks of their work. Common Errors are leniency, halo effect, central tendency, perpetual set, contrast error, status effect.

Keywords: Performance appraisal, performance evaluation, nursing personnel, nursing profession, benefit of evaluation.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Historically, it is found that performance management system was employed in the third century AD by the Chinese. In the 18th century, during the industrial revolution, factory managers became aware of the importance of their employee's performance on their production outputs. During first world war, man to man rating system for evaluation of military personnel was adopted by Walter D. Scott in U.S. army. Peter Drucker and Douglas MacGregor developed ideas of management by objectives (MBO) and employee motivation. Performance appraisal put emphasizes on the development of the individual. It is used for evaluation of technical, professional and management personnel. Researchers are developing theories on performance evaluation methods, can contribute to the success of an organization.

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"...an effective appraisal process rewards productive employees and assists the professional growth and development of inexperienced and unproductive individuals." – Mable H. Smith

Performance appraisal is a formal, structural system of measuring and evaluating an employee's job-related behavior. It is also helpful in predicting future benefits of the employee, organization, and society. There are some objectives of performance appraisal, which can be achieved through many methods.

Performance appraisal is periodic formal evaluation of how well the nurse performed his/her duties during a specific period. It is assessment of how staff member is doing his/her job. It refers to an evaluation of employee's performance.

DEFINITION

"It is the systemic evaluation of the individual with respect to his or her performance on the job and his or her potential for development."- *Dale S. Beach* [1]

MEANING

The word meaning of the "appraisal" is "to fix a price or value for something."

NEED AND IMPORTANCE

We know, in every organization, all employees work to achieve the common goal of the organization. The employees have individual differences. It means they are not equally efficient and able, but they work together. It is necessary to inform them, from time to time about their own level of performance in the organization so that their morale may be high. It is possible by adopting a fair system of performance appraisal.

Goodwin, C. et al, [2] stated that the development and adaptation of a comprehensive performance measurement system is vital for the proper assessment of employee performance. One way to manage nursing care more effectively and efficiently is to continuously review and improve the nurses' performance.

Matsuoka Midori [3] stated that most nursing administrators recognized the need of the performance appraisal system, the need of the education of the nursing administrator was suggested to introduce a performance appraisal system with the purpose of the development of ability based on the will and the fitness of the individual nurse and the use of talented people.

Cynthia D. Fisher et al described the following purposes/objectives of evaluation [4]

- To determine salary standards and to award merit increases.
- To select qualified individuals for promotion or transfer.
- To identify unsatisfactory employees for demotion or termination.
- To make inventories of talent with an organization.
- To determine training and development needs of employees.
- To improve the performance of work groups by examining and correcting the interrelationships among members.
- To improve communication between manager and employee and to reach an understanding on the objectives of the job.
- To establish standards of managerial job performance.
- To discover the aspirations of the employee and to reconcile them with the goals of the organization.
- To provide the employee with recognition for accomplishments.
- To inform employees "where they stand".

Albrecht S. described the Characteristics of Effective performance appraisal [5]

- The philosophy, purpose and objectives of the organization are clearly stated so that performance appraisal tool can be designed to reflect them.
- The purposes of performance appraisal are identified, communicated, and understood.
- Job descriptions are written for each job.
- The appraisal tool used is suited to the purpose for which it will be utilized and is accompanied by clear instructions for its use.
- The evaluators are trained in the use of tool.
- The performance appraisal procedure is delineated, communicated, and implemented.

- It should be supported from the top management.
- It should be fair and productive for all participants.

Table 1 depicts methods of performance evaluation by Wendy Demback Fitzgerald.

Table 1. Methods of Performance Evaluation by Wendy Demback Fitzgerald [6].

S.N.	Method	Description
1.	Essay technique	The evaluator writes an account of the employee's strengths, weakness and potentials in relation to the job description.
2.	Graphic rating scale	The evaluator assigns a numerical value or letter grade to performance factors ranging from superior to unsatisfactory.
3.	Check list	Expectations of performance are identified in behavioral language. The evaluator uses "yes" or "no" to indicate whether certain characteristics are absent or present.
4.	Field review	Several managers meet in a group to discuss each employee's rating and arrive at a consensus.
5.	Forced-choice rating	The evaluator chooses from groups of statements that best fit and least fit the individual being rated. The statements are weighed and scored.
6.	Critical incident technique	The evaluator observes and records instances of job performances that are of critical importance to the success or failure of the job.
7.	Work standards technique	The evaluator develops an objective and accurate appraisal based on work standards that have been established by management.
8.	Ranking	An order-of-merit ranking whereby the evaluator places the names of the most valued employee on the top of a list and the name of the least valued employee at bottom. The process continues until all employee are ranking ordered according to the evaluator's perception of their value.
	a. Alteration ranking method	
	b. Paired comparison ranking	The evaluator compares employees on selected criteria. A tally is placed beside the name of the employee who wins each comparison. The employee with the highest score is determined to be most valuable.
9.	Management by objectives	The manager evaluates the employee according to whether predetermined goal or objectives have been met. The employee is an active participant in the process.
10.	Behaviorally anchored rating scales	The evaluator rates the employee along an ordinal scale created from specific behaviors that reflect job performance on one dimension at a time.

FOLLOWING ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

1. Ensuring/enhancing Quality Nursing Care

Albrecht [5] stated that the ultimate goal of performance appraisal is to ensure safe effective patient care. The quality of care provided is largely dependent upon the knowledge, skills and abilities of personnel within the nursing care dependent. It is therefore important that nursing personnel achieve and maintain a high quality of performance in patient care. Performance appraisal must be able to assess the competency of employees and their effectiveness in carrying out responsibilities inherent in their positions.

Kalisch [7] described that ensuring patient safety and quality outcome of nursing care is a significant challenge for nurse leaders today. In his qualitative study on Missed Nursing Care, reported that it was essential to assess what specifically do nurses do or not do that leads to particulars patient outcomes and thus recommended the measurement of nursing care. Hence, development and use of a performance appraisal tool was recommended for ensuring safe and quality patient care. The quality of nursing practice requires appropriate skills, knowledge, and attitudes. Nursing service is committed to maintain its standards of care that can be achieved by the profession by evaluating its services periodically and taking necessary steps for its improvement.

Murrells and Cowan [8] conducted a study on Global Shortage of Qualified Nurses. It was reported that health care organizations are going through tremendous changes. Managers constantly are challenged with how to keep employees focused on the organizations vision and mission along with assuring quality in patient care and employee job satisfaction and retention. Majority of respondents (92%) expressed that the performance appraisal is a vehicle that can effectively keep employee focused. Most of the respondents (77%) stated that quality of care given within the organization and efficiency of the organization is reflected by the performance of the employee.

Rowland and Rowland [9] have discussed about the Slater Scale Nursing Competencies Rating Scale which measures the competencies displayed by a nurse as she performs nursing actions in providing care to patients. The scale yield both numerical and descriptive information thus providing means for an accounting for the quality of a nursing staff's performance and identifying areas of strengths and weakness to improve the quality of nurse performance.

2. Motivation

Baard, Paul P. & Neville, Susan M [10] stressed the performance evaluation sessions represents extraordinary opportunities to enhance motivation yet often are approached with anxiety. An innate desire for feedback meets with a learned response of fear, by both the evaluator and evaluatee. Psychological fusion theory explains the sources of this conflict and what nurse executives can do to use these performance evaluation sessions for motivational impact while ameliorating the attendant stress.

Kichhoff, Karin T [11] attempted to alert the Managers and Staff Nurses to the value and the growing importance of patient input in improving quality care so as to motivate them to develop systems of obtaining such input. The author stressed that the Nurse Managers can be the impetus to such a venture, and they can support the staff during the design and implementation of such a project. The patient input and nurse feedback would be an ongoing process at the bedside. The nurse sees the value and validity of patient input. She will begin to seek it.

3. Job Satisfaction

Caers, L. & Dubois et al. [12] stated that the growing labour shortage and declining quality of services in the nursing sector, exacerbated by an increasing demand for nurses, fewer nurses starting and more nurses leaving the profession draws increasing research attention to the motives reward preferences and job satisfaction of hospital nurses that all plummet down to utilization of performance evaluation.

Holdt and Gates [13] concluded that when administered properly, performance appraisals may lead to increased job satisfaction and decreased absenteeism and turnover rate; situations desired by the food service industry. Research Findings confirms the usefulness of performance appraisals in lowering Absenteeism of employees.

Jarvis, J. [14] revealed that staff viewed staff appraisal as a tool to improve the efficiency of the services provided to the community, job satisfaction for the staff and to ensure development of their full potential.

Best and Thurstone [15] concluded that although nursing is an integral component of health care the articulation and measurement of nurse sensitive quality indicator such as job satisfaction remain in their infancy.

4. Evaluate and improve the manager's own performance.
5. Employees can know how well he/she is doing.
6. Employees can know what their manager thinks of their work.
7. Employees can know their future.

Following are common errors in performance appraisal

- **Leniency:** It is a habit to over examine of performance.
- **Halo effect:** Tendency to erroneously evaluate an employee as a similar on all dimensions of performance, at a high, medium, or low.
- **Central tendency:** Tendency to erroneously evaluate all employees as average or near average.
- **Perpetual set:** Tendency for ratters to see what they want to see or expect to see.
- **Contrast error:** The several employees are compared to each other, rather than an objective standard of performance.

CONCLUSION

Performance appraisal is used for evaluation of technical, professional and management personnel. It is also helpful in predicting future benefits of the employee, organization, and society. There are some objectives of performance appraisal, which can be achieved through many methods. Performance appraisal of nursing personnel comprises some characteristics. Appraisal should be based on a standard, must know in advance. Appraiser should be someone who has observed the employee's work, the employee trusts, and respects on them. Performance appraisal is considered to be fair and productive by all. There are some advantages of performance appraisal and some errors.

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