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Performance Evaluation Criteria Development Process for Academic Staff at Universities

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Abstract

Lecturer performance is an important factor on the university success. Based on this, universities are using different criterion to assess and improve lecturer performance. The current study aims to explain some of the important HRM practices on the lecturer performance. The second aim of the paper is to determine the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) to evaluate lecturer performance. As result, we have developed the performance criteria to be evaluated periodically by departmental managers. The paper provides a detailed understanding of how AHP works and is useful to measure the performance at educational institutions to reward the high achieving lecturers. The model contains a robust methodology that might change from a university to another. Therefore, with this methodology, the criteria in a new setting might be reevaluated and the importance of each criterion can be recalculated.

Key words: Human Resource Management, Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP), employee performance, organizational effectiveness, employee evaluation

Introduction

Human Resource Management (HRM) is one of the challenging and complex fields in the modern management science to retain, encourage, and train employees for increased performance and quality (Schuler & Jackson, 1987). Nowadays, success of organizations heavily depends on how they utilize different resources in the organization, such as material resources, financial resources, and human resources to accomplish primary objectives (Budur, 2018a).

Besides, employee performance policies have some advantages for the organizations such as costs reduction (Budur et al., 2018), competitive advantages (Demir et al., 2020), quality in the customer relationship, coworker support, customer satisfaction (Budur et al., 2019), and customer loyalty in the long term (Demir & Mukhlis, 2017). Because of its crucial role in the long-term effectiveness of the organization, managers should carefully focus on the antecedents of performance factors in organizations. In this respect, scholars noted that training courses, fair treatments (Budur & Demir, 2019a), rewarding (Mohammed et al., 2020), communication (Yildiz & Amin, 2020), sharing decisions (Demir and Bulut, 2018), and empowerment (Budur & Poturak, 2020) are positively related to employee job satisfaction and performance.

According to Holt (1993) employee job satisfaction is a vital factor in every organization that allows employees to produce high-quality products with less errors. In this concept, he noted HRM policies such as training and developing, compensation, and rewarding are some of the triggers of job satisfaction that in turn cause employee performance respectively. Similarly, Becker and Gerhart (1996) argue that HRM has the ability to participate organization's performance through operational flexibility and effectiveness as a result of increased business profit.

Evaluating employee performance is vital for universities to see employees' abilities in their tasks and determine their performance level. In this respect, the aim of the paper is to investigate lecturer performance antecedents at a university by using Analytical Hierarchy Processing (AHP) techniques. In this method of analysis, the most important factors that are influential in the decision making are firstly determined by the experts in the field. Later, based on these importance levels, the related factors are defined by each indicator to facilitate decision making process (Zaim et al., 2020).

Kurdistan Region of Iraq is an emerging market that attract foreign investors in the last years (Budur and Poturak, 2021). However, lack of experience (Mohammed and Sahin, 2020), lack of trainings (Torlak et al., 2019), and managerial drawbacks in different sectors make it difficult to hire suitable candidates for the required jobs. Furthermore, there are not enough studies about measuring performance of HRM in the region (Bayiz Ahmad et al., 2013; Hadi et al., 2018).

Literature Review

Human Resource Management

Every organization has specific goals to achieve (Budur and Demir, 2019b). The important point by the organizational objective is facilitation and decreasing the waste while reaching these objectives (Demir and Budur, 2019). In this concept, one of the important tools is HRM. Therefore, its accepted that HRM practices are one of the most important functions of any organization, and have direct influence on the success of the organization (Hadi et al., 2018; Demir, 2019). McCourt & Eldridge (2003) noted that HRM have certain key practices such as recruitment, training, development, rewarding, job design, job description, and health, and safety work place that leverage organizational effectiveness through strengthening employee knowledge and capabilities. According to Storey and Sission (1993) HRM practices in the organization will increase its performance by selecting a good strategy by rewarding, compensation, and ensuring equal opportunity.

Employee Performance

An effective employee provides an organization with a strong chance in the global market especially when they are happy with their work and the employee and customer satisfaction are enhanced. The organizations need to motivate employees to increase their performance properly, which signals the strong relationship between employee satisfaction and performance (Khan & Yildiz, 2020; Mohammed and Sahin, 2020). Campbell et al. (1993) indicated that performance is about what the organization is committed to and how the employees work towards the commitment. In this competitive age, employee performance is one of the vital terms that every organization pays a special attention to and strives to acquire highly performing employees to increase their organizational efficiency using the HRM strategies of rewarding, training, empowering, and motivating (Alharthi et al., 2019; Qoura & Khalifa, 2016).

Designing a successful employee training plan or program improve the employee willingness to pursue the organization 's primary objectives (Top et al., 2020). Besides, scholars noted that an effective training is the primary reason of decreased turnover, improved quality in customer relationship, and increased productivity (Farooq & Aslam, 2011). Similarly, Ichniowski et al. (1997) specified that effective training programs can develop the performance and capability of staff in the job.

Based on the positive correlation between HRM and employee performance, employee is the blood in the organization, whereas employee motivation has positive impact on their performance respectively (Khalefa, 2015). Rewarding system is one of the greatest ways to motivate employee in the organization, and in turn to increase its performance (Budur & Demir, 2019a).

Furthermore, Page and Wong (2000) indicated that empowerment in the workplace is an important tool to improve employee capabilities for future opportunities. Besides, empowerment provides employees with increased motivation and performance (Al-Abrow, 2014). In the same way, empowerment provides employees with greater opportunities to demonstrate their capabilities within the organization, and also allows the employees to be involved in the organization 's management, enabling the employees to help design the rewarding program to raise the level of their performance (Al-Abrow, 2018).

Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP)

In our daily lives, we find ourselves having to choose the best alternative about something we need to do, such as buying a house, setting on career journey, and/or attending a good university. It is not an easy job. Sometimes we make decisions without proper information. In a work setting, a manager may judge/evaluates the performance of an employee based on their own perception, which may be problematic as mere perceptions tend to lack concrete information and evidence. But having a good HRM system can help make the right decision, evaluate the performance of employees correctly in the organization (Ozmen, Demir & Celepli, 2013).

Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) is a statistical tool that can be utilized to evaluate or measure performance and it can act as the 'good' system to which we referred above in order to aid us to determine the best alternative in life or business (Demir et al., 2019). In addition, AHP is a mathematical technique based on linear algebra which can be utilized by organizations to investigate complex decisions based on mathematics (Budur, 2018b). According to Figuera et al. (2005), mathematical analyses are very significant tools that we can utilize to collect information in order to make the right decision. In line with this, Saaty (1980) conceptualized a mathematical system to facilitate decision making processes within organizations. The system is explained in Table 1.

Table 1

Comparison Matrix of Saaty (1988)

Intensity of Importance	Definition	Explanation
1	Equal importance	Two activities contribute equally to the objective
3	Moderate importance	Experience and judgment slightly favor one over another
5	Strong importance	Experience and judgment strongly favor one over another
7	Very strong importance	Activity is strongly favored and its dominance is demonstrated in practice
9	Absolute importance	Importance of one over another affirmed on the highest possible order
2,4,6,8	Intermediate values	Used to represent compromise between the priorities listed above

Methodology

We collected the data at the Tishk International University (TIU) in Sulaymaniyah, Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The evaluation of our method is based on diverse criteria that can be changed based on the organization. The Head of the Business and Management Department responded to the questions.

Initially, we developed a scale of performance comparison at the Business and Management Department of the university by discussing with the experts of the field. Secondly, the developed criteria were presented to Head of the Department to evaluate the importance of each criterion compared to the others. Next, importance weights were calculated using the AHP methodology. Finally, we provided suggestions based on the weights we found.

The major objective of utilizing this method was to study the performance evaluation, which criterion/criteria is/are the most important for the lecturer in a private university. There are basically seven criteria in this study, which were important for the academics. These criteria can be changed based on the preferences of another institution willing to apply the method.

The Head of the Business and Management Department was asked to compare each criterion with all other criteria for evaluating the importance weights. Table 2 shows the details of the comparison questionnaire.

Table 2

Comparison questionnaire

Comes to the job on time	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Easy going with colleagues and students
Comes to the job on time	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Knowledgeable in his/her field
Comes to the job on time	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Finishes duties on time
Comes to the job on time	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Productive (writes articles, does projects, etc.)
Comes to the job on time	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Neatly dressed
Comes to the job on time	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Helps colleagues and students in case they need
Easy going with colleagues and students	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Knowledgeable in his/her field
Easy going with colleagues and students	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Finishes duties on time
Easy going with colleagues and students	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Productive (writes articles, does projects, etc.)
Easy going with colleagues and students	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Neatly dressed
Easy going with colleagues and students	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Helps colleagues and students in case they need
Knowledgeable in his/her field	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Finishes duties on time
Knowledgeable in his/her field	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Productive (writes articles, does projects, etc.)
Knowledgeable in his/her field	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Neatly dressed
Knowledgeable in his/her field	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Helps colleagues and students in case they need
Finishes duties on time	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Productive (writes articles, does projects, etc.)
Finishes duties on time	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Neatly dressed
Finishes duties on time	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Helps colleagues and students in case they need
Productive (Writes articles, does projects...etc.)	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Neatly dressed
Productive (Writes articles, does projects...etc.)	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Helps colleagues and students in case they need
Wearing neatly	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Helps colleagues and students in case they need

Table 2 shows the survey questions for the experts to compare each criterion with the other criteria within a range of 1 – 9. Number (1) represents equally important, (2) equally to moderately, (3) moderately important, (4) moderately strong, (5) strongly important (6) strongly to very strongly preferred, (7) very strongly preferred, (8) very strongly to extremely preferred, (9) extremely preferred.

It may be worthwhile offering a short description of how the system works at this stage. For instance, the first row compares 'come to the job on time' to 'easy going with colleagues and students'. The expert is expected to think about the comparison and mark a number in accordance with the importance he/she attaches to the statement of preference. For example, if the expert selects the number on the right-hand side, it tells us 'easy going with colleagues and students' is moderately preferred than 'come to the job on time', but if the expert selects a number in the left-hand side it means that 'comes to the job on time' is moderately preferred than 'easy going with colleagues and students'. Then, considering the university setting he/she works for, the expert looks at the next row and compares 'comes to the job on time' to 'knowledgeable in his/her field' marking the degree of importance in this comparison accordingly. The expert then moves on row by row thinking about and marking the degree of importance in the new comparison.

This performance indicated that we have utilized in this study are whether:

- the lecturer comes to the job on time,
- the lecturer is easy going with colleagues and students,
- the lecturer is knowledgeable in his/her field,
- the lecturer finishes duties on time,
- the lecturer productive (writes articles, does projects, etc.), and
- the lecturer is neatly dressed.

We selected these abovementioned indicators in discussion with the experts in the field of education who believed that the criteria were vital to evaluate the performance of a typical lecturer as we have already mentioned that the criteria can be changed from organization to organization.

The results in Table 3 have been produced out of the questionnaire results we have asked the Head of Business and Management Department to fill out. For example, the figure '1/3' in Table 3 (row:2, col:3) indicates that 'easy going with friends and colleagues' is moderately preferred than 'come to the job on time'.

Table 4 indicates the normalized and final weights in the AHP. The comparison matrix is normalized by dividing each cell with the summation of the column. For example: in the initial comparison matrix, 'comes to the job on time' is 1/34 which is equal to 0.03. In this case, 0.03 is the normalized and final weight of AHP. 'Easy going with friends and colleagues' is 3/34. In this case, 0.09, the result of the division, becomes the normalized and final weight of AHP. The global weights show the importance of each criterion in total. For example, 'come to the job on time' has importance weight that equals to 0.02; 'easy going with friends and colleagues' has importance weight of 0.06, etc. The criterion with the highest number becomes more important than the other one.

Based on the results, we can argue that the less important criterion for a lecturer's performance in a private university is 'come to the job on time' with the weight of 0.02. The most important, that is with highest weight of 0.39, is 'knowledgeable in his/her field'. The total for all of the criteria is equal to 1 as the total of importance equals to 1 or 100%.

Table 3

Comparison Matrix

	Comes to the job on time	Easy going with friends and colleagues	Knowledgeable with his/her field	Finishes duties on time	Productive (Writing articles, projects...etc.	Neatly dressed	Helps colleagues and friends in case they need help
Comes to the job on time	1	1/3	1/9	1/6	1/7	1/2	1/6
Easy going with friends and colleagues	3	1	1/7	1/5	1/4	3	1/5
Knowledgeable with his/her field	9	7	1	3	4	7	4
Finishes duties on time	6	5	1/3	1	1/3	4	1/4
Productive (Writing articles, projects...etc.	7	4	1/4	3	1	3	2
Neatly dressed	2	1/3	1/7	1/4	1/3	1	1/4
Helps colleagues and friends in case they need help	6	5	1/4	4	1/2	4	1
Total	34	23	2	12	7	23	8

Table 4

Normalized Weights

	Comes to the job on time	Easy going with friends and colleagues	Knowledgeable with his/her field	Finishes duties on time	Productive (Writing articles, projects...etc.)	Neatly dressed	Helps colleagues and friends in case they need help	Global weights
Comes to the job on time	0.03	0.01	0.05	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Easy going with friends and colleagues	0.09	0.04	0.06	0.02	0.04	0.13	0.03	0.06
Knowledgeable with his/her field	0.26	0.31	0.45	0.26	0.61	0.31	0.51	0.39
Finishes duties on time	0.18	0.22	0.15	0.09	0.05	0.18	0.03	0.13
Productive (Writing articles, projects...etc.)	0.21	0.18	0.11	0.26	0.15	0.13	0.25	0.18
Neatly dressed	0.06	0.01	0.06	0.02	0.05	0.04	0.03	0.04
Helps colleagues and friends in case they need help	0.18	0.22	0.11	0.34	0.08	0.18	0.13	0.18
Total	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Table 5

Derivation of global weights

	Comes to the job on time	Easy going with friends and colleagues	Knowledgeable with his/her field	Finishes duties on time	Productive (Writing articles, projects...etc.	Neatly dressed	Helps colleagues and friends in case they need help
Comes to the job on time	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.03
Easy going with friends and colleagues	0.07	0.06	0.06	0.03	0.05	0.12	0.04
Knowledgeable with his/her field	0.22	0.41	0.39	0.38	0.74	0.29	0.71
Finishes duties on time	0.15	0.29	0.13	0.13	0.06	0.16	0.04
Productive (Writing articles, projects...etc.	0.17	0.23	0.10	0.38	0.18	0.12	0.35
Neatly dressed	0.05	0.02	0.06	0.03	0.06	0.04	0.04
Helps colleagues and friends in case they need help	0.15	0.29	0.10	0.51	0.09	0.16	0.18

Table 6*Rational index table*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Rational Index	0.00	0.00	0.58	0.90	1.12	1.23	1.32	1.41	1.45	1.49

Table 7*Inconsistency level of the comparison*

Weighted Sum Value	Global Weights	Lambda	Lambda Max	C.I.	C.R.
0.18	0.02	7.46			
0.42	0.06	7.13			
3.13	0.39	8.10			
0.97	0.13	7.59	8	0.130	0.0983
1.55	0.18	8.38			
0.30	0.04	7.41			
1.48	0.18	8.40			

After the normalization, we calculated the global weight by taking the sum all of them and divided them by 7 as we have seven criteria.

Afterwards, we need to check the logical comparison we made while producing the initial comparison matrix. In order to do that, we need to calculate the consistency ratio. The literature suggests that the consistency ratio should be 0.10 (Demir et al., 2019). Consistency ratio is calculated by using the following formula:

$$C.R. = \frac{C.I.}{R.I.}$$

In order to calculate the consistency ratio, consistency index should be calculated. The formula for consistency index is:

$$CI = \frac{\lambda_{max} - n}{n - 1}$$

Lastly, λ_{max} is calculated by taking average division of weighted sum values by the global weight for each criterion.

Table 6 shows the rational index; hence, it is not needed to be calculated. Based on the number of criteria, rational index values are constant.

As a result of the calculation we have seen that consistency ratio is equal to 0.09; therefore, we can accept the comparison matrix as consistent or logical; so, based on these results, the importance weights have been calculated logically. Moreover, we can say that for a lecturer in a private university, the most important criterion is being 'knowledgeable in his/her field', and secondly 'being productive (writing articles, projects, etc)'. Equally important is with 'helping colleagues and friends in case they need help'; and thirdly, 'finishes duties on time' is important and we see that 'neatly dressed', 'easy going with friends and colleagues' and 'comes to the job on time' have lower importance in the work environment compared to the other criteria as a result of our findings.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to elaborate the important weights of employee at private universities, specifically within the context of the Business and Management Department of Tishk International University in Sulaymaniyah, Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Initially we have developed a comparison matrix and we met and discussed with the experts in the department. Secondly, we asked the experts to evaluate the importance of each performance indicator compared to the importance of the others.

Moreover, we evaluated the importance of each indicator using AHP. The results showed us that the most important criterion among all was 'being knowledgeable in his/her field'. The second utmost important criterion was being 'productive (writing articles, does projects, etc)', and 'helps colleagues and students in case they need'. Both of these criteria were found to be important at the same rate. The third most important criterion was 'finishes duties on time'; the fourth was 'easy going with friends and colleagues'; the fifth was 'neatly dressed' which seemed to be not very important for the department. Finally, the least important one was 'come to the job on time'.

Base on the results, the department will be able to evaluate and reward their lecturers annually. A standard system such as this is expected to improve the lecturer satisfaction, job satisfaction, motivation, leading to increased job performance.

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