

# Dilemmas of appraisal article review example

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



The purpose of this paper is to provide a summary of Fiona Wilson's article "Dilemmas of Appraisal". The paper also gives an analysis of the article while examining the main aim of the author in writing this article and the major aim of the research. Additionally, I will also analyze the research methods used in this research and the findings of these methods and procedures. Finally, I will provide a conclusion alongside some recommendations based on my findings and inferences concerning the research.

The main aim of the article Dilemmas of appraisal is to examine the underlining assumptions of the design of appraisal schemes. It also identifies the dilemmas and difficulties existing in the process. In this research paper, the subjective view of the difficulties and dilemmas appraisers and personnel professional are uncovered. These difficulties and dilemmas are not only uncovered but also discussed at length. The major considers the unitarist view of appraisal as naïve. The author also considers personnel professionals and appraisers to regard appraisal process as a political, which reinforces discrimination. However, the author maintains that if good human relations are included into the appraisal process, both parties would eventually considers the process valuable and provides feedback that could assist in setting objectives. The author conducted a research compiling the research data and literature from a study of women and appraisal in the university sector in order to understand the appraisal process and the subjective experience of the dilemmas and difficulties that come along with the process. From a unitarist neo-human view, appraisal entails individuals learning about themselves and combining their efforts in order to achieve common organizational goals as well as satisfy their personal interests.

## Introduction

Several work settings have lately adopted performance appraisals including universities, schools, and National Health Service. However, it should be noted that the deployment of appraisal has not been accompanied by the developments in the theory that surround appraisal. Some research have also revealed that the public appraisal processes are usually unclear and that the view of the individuals appraised in this sector are little available. The neo-human relations alongside unitarist perspective stressing a unitarist purpose between employees and employers have dominated the literature on appraisal. These literatures view employees as resources to businesses, and provide unitarist perceptions generally insensitive to influence, context and outcome. Most of these literatures also view appraisal as a tool for enhancement of human relations and boost the morale of business employees. Others also provide that appraisal can be used to provide information for the decision making process within organizations, in this regard, performance appraisal facilitates managerial control by providing information about the current and the desired situation. The main assumption of appraisal is that in the absence of appraisal, performance will reduce and vice versa. However, this assumption has limitations; for instance, appraisal might leave some workers feeling inferior, desolate, or unfit for work, while also making others who are highly rated by the appraisal feeling superior over their counterparts.

Appraisal has several complexities associated with it. First, it creates contradictions and dilemmas for those responsible for the management or subjected to the appraisal process. The article indicates that there is lack of

research that has looked at the working appraisal schemes. It therefore recommends that additional research is necessary to advance the practice of appraisal.

The major dilemmas of appraisal are in the criteria to choose when conducting staff assessment. The subjective evaluation and trait oriented criteria, and the objective criteria are the distinctive appraisal criteria. The objective criteria are usually considered judgmental. However, counseling has been considered more appropriate since it does not involve making judgments, but allows employees to reflect on their performance and make their own judgments and adjustments. Nevertheless, making appraisal a counseling process is a major challenge. The other difficulty in appraisal lies with the appraisers, who might intentionally withhold some information from the appraisal process for their interests. Additionally, some employees who might have been ranked lower by the appraisal might blame themselves or be blamed by the management without considering other factors such as resources. Women also tend to underestimate their capabilities compared to men in the appraisal process. This gender bias can also be found on the part of the appraiser. According to this article, women are expected to work much higher standards compared to their male colleagues in order to be considered competent.

This article lists other possible distortions of the process as the Halo effect, where the criterion used in the appraisal distorts the assessment, the Crony effect, which refers to the distortion caused by the closeness of the relationship between the appraised and the appraiser. The other distortions include Doppelganger effect where the appraisal ratings reflect the behavior

or character of the appraiser and the appraised and the Veblen effect where the assessed individuals achieve relative ratings. Unclear performance documentation, inadequately defined standards of performance, inadequate time for discussion and reliance on gut feelings are some of the errors that the appraisers might make in the development and use of appraisal schemes. The aforementioned information therefore implies that less than 20% of the performance appraisals are conducted effectively. Nevertheless, accountability, control, development and staff assessment are fundamental phenomena in every organization. Consequently, it is necessary to design an appraisal scheme that ensures achievement and development of the staff.

## **Appraisal in Universities**

According to the literature consulted by the author of this article, the major reason for the introduction of appraisal into universities in 1988 was to increase accountability and control of academics, and to make employees accountable for their activities. The article also recognizes that appraisal could ideally provide feedback on the staff performance, stimulate their development and promote equal opportunities as well as reduce biased performance judgments. However, the article also singles out that the reality in appraisal is that, it is a disciplinary technology that intends to create reality rather than reflect on the same. The article also indicates that appraisal is meant to make an individual visible and knowable to the organization and themselves. Just as in the other fields, the article also indicates that appraisal creates gender bias in universities. Despite heavily loading women with the work in these institutions, men receive greater rewards for equal or even lesser responsibilities.

The major aim of the research was to study the British universities' appraisal systems, specifically examining the problems, weaknesses and strengths of the appraisal schemes used in these universities in the view of women and the implementers of these schemes. Since the research was mainly interested in women, only male personnel directors were included. The reasons for focusing on women in this research included the neglecting of gender in previous researches, little research on university settings and the fewer women at the top of academic structure compared to other professions.

## **Research Methods**

The researchers collected documentation on the appraisal schemes from five universities and compiled them together with those of a sixth university, which they were familiar with it. Personnel professionals and the author interviewed a sample of personnel professionals from the five universities through a semi-structured interview. The questions that were asked in the interview included the schemes of appraisal adapted by these universities and their experience of these schemes among other questions. An additional sample of 30 women staff, 15 from each of the two selected universities was interviewed.

## **Findings and Dilemmas**

There were at least six dilemmas that were found in this study. The dilemmas are as listed below.

- Does the appraisee need judgment or counseling
- Should the appraisee be appraised by their Unit Heads or not

- Should the employee discuss weakness and training needs with an appraiser if that appraiser is also making judgments about promotion or even demotion
- Should the appraisee set their own goals or have them set for them
- Should the appraisal and promotion be linked, and
- Should the information from the appraisal be confidential or more public information

## **Conclusion**

Even though appraisal schemes were initially created to enhance the development of organizations through motivating the staffs, various difficulties have come up, which makes the schemes even more dangerous to organizational developments. The various dilemmas have made the appraisal processes difficult to organize and conduct. Even so, selecting the best criteria to use in appraisal is often a hectic task. If appraisal is not properly conducted, the organizations might even suffer greater consequences that there were before the appraisal. Nevertheless, it should be noted that appraisal is critical and organizations need to develop and implement the best appraisal schemes, lest they suffer.