

Ethical issues in performance evaluation essays example

[Business](#), [Management](#)



Values, morals, and ethics have become quite important these days as employees concerns have gained equal importance as organizational policies and objectives. Decisions in human resource management do affect jobs of employees and future prospects, and managers frequently face ethical dilemmas and moral concerns. This paper describes ethical and moral unease that leaders face in performance evaluations. The author has also discussed the application of ethically responsible management practices in performing assessments.

The biggest dilemma with evaluations is that they are subjective and managers, often, tend to mix personal feelings while conducting evaluations. Theoretically, measurement should be based on an objective criteria, and there should not be any scope of individual factors. However, there are instances when managers, knowingly or unknowingly, find it difficult to stick to the objective standards. For instance, they may tend to compare an individual's performance with other employees, not against any objective standard.

At times, employees' expectations may not match the rewards for good evaluation thereby causing the moral conflict in manager's mind.

Organizational policies often link favorable evaluation with rewards and companies are ethically responsible for it. However, managers may not feel that a particular employee deserves that. For example, an employee might expect that his good feedback will promote him to manager's post. However, supervisors may not feel that he is ready to take on the task of management. So, promotions linked appraisals may create confusion, and mismatch between employees' expectations and managers' opinions.

Sometimes, organizations use performance management to circumvent the law; it is also an ethical conflict for managers. For instance, organizations may decide to impart poor evaluations to a group of employees to create a legal basis for outsourcing their jobs in cheaper cost.

Considering these situations, the author recommends minimizing personal bias and friendship factor to make this process ethically responsible.

Different research studies have identified a positive linkage between performance measurement and other factors including employees' motivation, and job satisfaction. Fair performance evaluations can act as a motivating factor to employees and instills a higher level of efficiency. Not only a particular employees, ethical and fair evaluations serve as a morale booster for other employees also and encourage them to optimize their work quality. As team and group work are emphasized these days, managers must show to employees that how their performance affects other employees' jobs and overall organizational productivity. It will strengthen the notion of cooperation and teamwork in the company.

Scholars have argued that the concept of a reliable performance evaluation system does carry a connection with the social aspect. Employees are a key stakeholder in CSR programs and responsible performance evaluations do affect employees' motivation, job satisfaction, and overall personality. In that sense, it should be seen as broad social-psychological process. Also, performance evaluation activities were conditioned by inter-personal and group processes in mid 90's. Researchers have, thus, argued that social interactions, interdependence, responsibility, relations of reporting, and social norms are the bedrock of performance management activities in a

firm. Social norms can facilitate or obstruct performance appraisal(PA) techniques and activities through group or individual action or inaction. Conversely, PA events can put a gradual impact on the way of communication, behavior, attitudes, and expectations of the parties involved. Empirical research has revealed that this reciprocal interaction has generated a performance culture in organizations that find psychological contracts between the organization and individuals. The author, thus, finds a basis to assume that an ethical and responsible performance management system will impact employees' attitudes in a positive manner. It will gradually put a positive impact on the society as a whole. Though there are little direct evidences to this linkage; literature does suggest indirect connections between performance management and social welfare. A competent performance evaluation model is also a part of corporate social responsibilities of organizations. Researchers have emphasized that traditional models of evaluation fail to assess the extent to which organizations have fulfilled their responsibilities in a social context. Thus, stakeholder and CSR oriented models of assessment should be adopted. These models require making improvements in three essential components, i. e., evaluation standards, evaluation methods, and evaluation targets; it is a step to make it more universal, responsible and ethical. Theoretically, CSR can be categorized into four parts, i. e., corporate financial responsibility, corporate legal responsibility, corporate ecological responsibility, and corporate ethical responsibility. The author opines that performance management is a part of corporate moral responsibility which is indicated by corporate reputation, employment contribution rates,

transparency, accountability, and other related factors. Researchers have stated that performance management is all about ethical management and a responsible performance evaluation system meets underlying values including fairness, responsibility, caring, trustworthiness, and respect. There are many workplace examples that reflect the moral dilemma involving performance evaluations. Thomas joined a mid-sized family business three months ago as a chief executive officer. When the firm decided to downsize, the CEO rested the decision on the assessments made by Thomas. Thomas decided to draw the line based on the average of performance evaluations of last three years. Managers would rank any extraordinary cases where employees joined less than three years ago or so. When managers submitted the list of employees, Thomas was puzzled to see N/A written in front of three employees. On checking with the CEO, he got to know that these employees were with the company since its inception while the examination system was launched just six years back. CEO agreed to their request of continuing informal appraisals. However, this time he suggested to Thomas that it was the right time they should retire. They had already earned a lot and company could retain the jobs of younger in place of them. It was a moral dilemma before Thomas, who was not in favor to take a decision without objective performance appraisal scores. If he did not agree with the CEO, he own job security could land in trouble. If he did, he might be taking decision on personal feelings of CEO and not on any objective standard.

Though Thomas was not governing by any strict legal regulations, the decision had more a moral and ethical connection. Performance evaluation

should be based on objective standards but in day-to-day scenario, managers keep facing ethical and moral dilemmas more than legal bindings.

Conclusion

Performance evaluation is a broad concept that goes beyond the cognitive model to impact social moorings in a gradual manner. Thus, organizations must adopt a stakeholder-oriented performance evaluation models and improve methods of assessment. Evaluation models should rule out personal bias to give way to objective standards and processes.

References

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