

Performance Appraisal System: Hurting Gender Equality

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Abstract: Much research and work has been directed to women in management in last two decades. Despite progress being towards gender equality in almost every field, it is seen that there are still real differences when it comes to career development, leadership roles and top management levels in the organizations. Whenever the topic of gender equality comes up, it is mainly within the context of women being victims of workplace discrimination.

When gender role stereotyping is done during performance review, it has far reaching consequences as performance review is mainly linked with salary, promotions, transfers and other employment related decisions. Therefore, it is very important to eliminate gender biasing as it will affect the organization which may lose out top performers and may lead to low motivation in employees who are performing well.

Keywords: gender biasing, performance review, role stereotyping, appraisal

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I. Introduction

There is no hidden truth that today as well many big and small organizations are facing the problem of gender biasing which is affecting them mainly in a negative way. The disparity is even greater when it comes to monetary benefits, leadership roles, and top management positions. Organizations generally lose out their top performers because of gender biasing and in a few cases they are exposed to lawsuits which greatly destroy their reputation in the market during the whole process. Here, it is important to understand that biasing can be due to subconscious mind as well and we all are subjected to it because of our own belief system, culture & traditions.

Gender biasing generally starts anytime from pre requisites to performance rewards time but performance review plays a very important role & gender biasing during performance review has far reaching consequences as it involves giving monetary benefits, motivation, job satisfaction, training & development to an employee, various other employment related decisions. These reviews were given basically to promote top performing, talented employees but ironically gender biasing is acting as a barrier to the gateway of advancement in many organizations today.

Objectives

- To understand the perception of employees about gender biasing in the organization
- To identify the role of using gender neutral language & discovering whether language & content differs on the basis on employee's gender
- To identify steps in order to improve the existing performance review process this will help in ensuring fair treatment to all employees in the organization.

II. Research Methodology

Research Methodology is the study of conducting research in order to explore/modify the new/existing facts.

The term "Research" is composed of two words: "re" and "search" which means to search again, research for new facts or to modify the existing fact.

Research is a scientific way of answering questions and testing hypothesis.

Research is the systematic and objective analysis and recording of controlled observations that may lead to the development of generalizations, principles, or theories, resulting in prediction and possible control of events.

According to Bulmer, Research is primarily committed to establishing systematic, reliable and valid knowledge about the social world.

According to Clifford, Research comprises of

- Defining and redefining problems
- Formulating hypothesis
- Collecting

- Organizing
- Evaluating data
- Making decision
- Suggesting solutions
- Reaching conclusions
- Finally, carefully testing the conclusions

According to Redman and Mory, Research as a systematic effort to gain new knowledge.

Sampling

The period of this research study was from November 2018 to March 2019. The study has certain limitations because it is not possible to collect feedback from all the employees of the organization, so a sample of only 60 employees was selected by the researcher for conducting the survey. The study covers all the major departments of the organization such as Marketing, Human Resource, Information Technology, Customer Service, and Finance under the survey.

Methods Used For Collecting Data

For conducting this research study the following data were used:

1) Primary Data: The researcher collects the original data by putting in direct efforts through surveys, interviews and direct observation. It is comparatively expensive to collect data through primary sources than secondary data making it more relevant as well as more current any research projects.

The primary data was collected through:

Questionnaires: 60 questionnaires were distributed covering various departments such as Marketing, Human Resource, Finance, Customer Service, Information Technology etc. for getting the required information for the study and then it is interpreted. It helped in getting firsthand information from the employees directly which are then analyzed in order to get the most accurate conclusions for the study purpose.

Informal discussions: Informal discussions were held with various employees in the organization in the available time, especially in the Human Resource and Training Department. This helped in gaining some additional information giving a better overview to perform an effective research study.

2) Secondary Data: Secondary data refers to data that was collected by someone like other researchers researching on the related topic than the current researcher or user of that data. Common sources of secondary data include censuses, information collected by government departments, organizational records and data that was originally collected for other research purposes by some other previous researchers on the various topics.

For this research study, secondary data sources used are, various administrative files and records maintained and used by the organization, organization's website, HR manuals and handouts.

The researcher has used both primary and secondary data in order to test biasing and to answer tailored questions to elicit the data which is important and relevant and will help the researcher in the study.

Sample Size

On the basis of the objectives of the study, the researcher has designed a questionnaire which will be filled by the selected 60 employees including Appraiser and Appraisee.

The researcher has taken up Random sampling method for the research study.

III. Data Research Instrument

Questionnaire: Researcher has collected the data from all 60 employees working in double shifts by taking one on one interview starting from employees working in administration, human resource, training department in the given available time and also an online survey was conducted to get responses. It has close ended questions which were related to the objective of the study.

Key Findings

- 60% employees agreed that their organization is still suffering from gender biasing and 64% agreed that high achieving men and women are described differently during the performance review process.
- 68% employees thinks that as a society we still don't like women defending themselves or requesting that they get more, also during performance review they get more vague/non actionable feedbacks.

- 72% employees agreed that a woman's personality traits are considered majorly at work rather than her skills and abilities and 57% agreed that they were less likely to be consulted when it comes to important decision making process related to organization's performance.
- 44% employees believe that women get less detailed feedback which may help in improving her work performance than men but generally receives critical feedbacks during performance review as compared to their male counterparts.
- 80% employees believe that limited knowledge about an employee can be one of the causes of biasing at work.
- Both appraisers and appraisee agreed that if during performance review gender neutral language will be used with questions without subjectivity will drastically help in reducing gender biasing at work.
- 92% agreed that having more frequent feedbacks will help in identifying different styles of leadership which will help in reducing gender biasing at work.
- 84% employees think that judging by making small groups will help employees in knowing a lot about each other's work, skills and abilities which will definitely help in reducing biasing.
- 96% employees think that by introducing a mechanism to give anonymous feedback to the manager of an employee will help in reducing unintended biasness at work.
- Each and every employee in the organization accepted that by removing gender biasing will restore their trust completely in the organization's performance appraisal system.

Limitations

- This research study is limited only to SopraSteria & HCL Tech Pvt Ltd., Delhi & NCR region.
- The results of the research can't be generalized to other organizations in IT industry
- Employees were a bit afraid to reveal their identity while taking surveys and answering direct questions.
- Few employees seem to have biased opinions as they were having some tiff with their superiors.
- All the employees of the organization were not a part of this research study, the sample size was limited to 60 employees only.

A sample of 60 employees was selected for the purpose of conducting the survey as well as for collecting the relevant data but most of the time all the employees of the organization cooperated and were very helpful. In spite of their busy schedules they took out time to fill the questionnaire, answering an open ended question in a bit detail during direct interaction which helped the researcher in collecting some additional inputs and information required for the study.

IV. Suggestions and Recommendations

- All employees agreed that there exists gender biasing in the organization so it is important for the organization to review employees' performance without any biasing and should not use different descriptions to define men and women employees as it may demotivate top performers as well.
- During the performance review, the organization should consider women's skills and abilities rather than considering personality traits and giving vague feedbacks on the same.
- The appraiser should discuss all the weaknesses and strengths of women employees which will help in improving performance in the future.
- The organization should include a mechanism of more frequent feedbacks and should judge by making small groups so that employees know a lot about each other's capabilities, skills and different leadership styles to eliminate biasing from the system.
- Women employees should also be consulted on important matters as it is done in case of male employees.
- The organization should add a mechanism of giving anonymous feedback to the manager of an employee will help in reducing intending biasness and employee's trust will be increased/restored in the performance appraisal process
- The performance review process should include specific questions in order to minimize the relative subjectivity effect and gender neutral language should be used throughout in order to receive and analyze the information effectively and efficiently.
- Those feedbacks which are not relevant should be deleted carefully.

V. Conclusion

Even after having good intentions if execution part is poor then the process lose its meaning and this is true in case of reviewing employee's performance in the organization. But the good news is that performance appraisal process flaws can be fixed if identified properly. By giving anonymous feedback to the appraiser can help in reducing gender biasing. Top performers should be treated fairly irrespective of their gender and women

employees should be given fair chances when it comes to leadership roles, top management positions and various other related employment decisions and roles.

Designing specific questions with gender neutral language in the performance review process will definitely help the organization in reducing/eliminating gender biasing from their system. It is very important for an organization to perform its best in the market to consider its employees skills and abilities at work rather than judging them on their personality traits which will help in building a system with loyal, ambitious, motivated and innovative employees. There are many organizations which have started introducing several policies and schemes in order to remove gender biasing from their system and they are performing really well in the market and other organizations suffering from gender biasing are putting in efforts to eliminate it in order to obtain its aims and objectives.

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