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Performance Appraisal in Greek Public Sector

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Abstract

The basic element of the survey is the investigation of the Greek public sector and in particular the way in which the system evaluates the performance of undertaken task. In this article, we examine the relationship between the variables (gender, age) and the variables (objective/ subjective potential in appraisal and general attribute of the subjects for appraisal to the appraisal system). As far as the gender is concerned (male, female), it is obvious that this variable can have different influence on the attribute of those asked and the same happens with age, which is of equal importance.

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1. Introduction

In this article we examine the people's appraised attitude forwards appraisal systems. In particular we focus on the Greek State Sector as it has been in the Public Eye recently. It is believed that an appraisal system can be effective if it is put into appropriate practice and as a result can contribute to the employee's meritocracy. So, we carried out a survey in different fields of the public sector with the aim of examining the objectivity of appraisal systems as well as the appraised people's attitude towards them. In order to analyze the data we collected, we carried out checks χ^2 (Chi Square) in order to examine the relationship between the independent variables (Gender-Age) and the dependent variables (objective/subjective potential of the appraisal and the general attitude of appraised people towards appraisal systems). In the first unit we are going to present the international and Greek

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Bibliography we looked up whereas in the second unit the Methodology Survey Tool is going to be presented. Finally, in the third unit the results of the Survey are to be announced.

2. Literature review

Appraisal of performance of each employee in the completion of a task in specific time is considered to be one of the most important variables contributing to workforce and State Organization development (Papalexandi, Mpourantas 2004). According to Baruch (1996): “it is two main purposes. First, as a source of information used by management to make decisions about promotions, salaries, training needs and training support. Second, it is used as a feedback tool for employees, facilitating personal improvement and development”. However, the appraisal system is effective on its own only if the appraised himself is positive to the whole procedure, considering it objective. Objectivity constitutes a crucial factor, which affects the appraisal system and is likely to vary according to gender (male- female) and age. However, the attitude towards the appraisal system can be subjective. The appraisal of task performance is determined by the total number of actions– activities, which in turn determine the procedure followed in measuring the employee’s effectiveness in the task undertaken.

The procedure is focused on measuring each employee’s real performance in accordance with their ability to achieve the goals of the organization (Fletcher 2001, Longenecker and Nykodym 1996). In particular, not only the appraised but also the person responsible for the appraisal is likely to be affected by different cultures such as company culture, personal relationships and attitudes. ‘Both parties of the appraisal system may have the scope to follow their own personal agendas that reflect social attitudes and organizational cultures built up over decades’ (Boyden and Paddison, 1986; Ng and Chiu, 2001; Willey, 2003; Wilson, 2000).

Referring to gender discrimination, despite the fact that the woman has entered workplace there seems to be some discrimination and prejudice. The woman’s position in the Greek public life in decision making (Dimou 1989) is marginal and assisting (Avdela 1987, Pavlidou 1989). Since females are hired in positions where low specialization and limited responsibilities are required it is obvious, a woman’s success in workplace is attributed rather to good looks than personal skills. “Female employees who perform well may not always receive due credit because their performance is attributed to characteristics other than ability.” (Nieva and Gutek (1980) and Haefner (1977)).

In addition, gender influences the attitude of the appraised to the appraisal system. This belief is likely to be affected by additional external factors, which differentiate the initial attitude. The attitude of the appraised is also affected by age. It is common, knowledge that younger people have a stronger feeling of doubting and reacting and they tend to disregard any mechanism gearing to check and evaluate their performance at work. Additionally, older appraised people seem to be negative and prejudiced towards the appraisal system, regarding it as redundant since that did not exist in the past years. Consequently, age plays an important role in the appraisal system, which combined with other factors such personal qualities, values, political beliefs can form a positive or negative attitude towards the appraisal system. It depends on the organization itself whether it will accept, adopt and promote the appraisal system or not.

3. Research methodology

The survey, which took place was in a questionnaire form, with multiple choice questions and additional personal and clarification questions which helped in characterizing the sample. The aim of this survey is to examine whether appraisal systems are objective or not the appraised people’s reactions towards appraisal as well as spot the conditions which make them nervous and worried. We examine how these differentiate according to the appraised person’s gender and age in State/Public organizations. The questions we intend to answer in this survey are the following:

- How gender or age affect the objectivity of appraisal systems.

- Whether personal opinion of the person responsible is subjective and how this differentiates according to gender and age.
- What are the feelings and emotions during the appraisal procedure
- What conditions are more stressful during appraisal

3.1. Sample

Males and females aged from 18 to over 50 constitute the sample and are from different walks of life (from primary school graduates to doctorate holders). These people come from different State Organizations such as the Ministry of Employment, the Psychiatric Clinic of Attica, the Hellenic Post, the Employment Agency, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Press, the Ministry of Defence, the Technological Educational Institute of Patra, the Ministry of Culture, the Regional Training Institute of Northern Aegean Mytilini and the Hellenic Fire Brigade.

3.2. Collecting data

Four hundred and forty (440) questionnaires were handed out of which four hundred and twenty one (421) were either fully or partially answered. From these questionnaires we collected the data, analyzed them and came to some conclusions. Besides the answers to the questions, there were comments, which really contributed to the better understanding of the attitude of the person asked on the appraisal systems. It is obvious that gender, age and external factors affect the person's asked attitude towards the appraisal system taking into account the comments made, which vary. For example, some people asked, maintain the appraisal ought to be objective, clear and according to employment rules whereas some others doubt objectivity and the existence of appraisal systems.

3.3. Analyzing data

The above data was examined with the help of SPSS. Specifically, we carried out checks χ^2 (Chi Square) considering gender and age independent variables whereas taking objectivity/subjectivity and people's asked attitude as dependent variables.

3.4. Findings

Question 1: To what extent gender and age affect the objectivity of appraisal systems.

In the beginning, we set "gender" as an independent variable and objectivity of the used appraisal systems (for employee's performance) as a dependent variable. We made some suppositions.

- H0: There is no relationship between the two variables.
- H1: There is some relationship between the two variables.

From the results we realize that Sig = 0,00(<0,05), concluding that gender does affect objectivity. Because some expected counts were <5 (less than 5) we carried out the Monte Carlo check which verified that there is some relationship between the two variables.

Then we examined the relationship between age and objectivity of the appraisal systems. The suppositions were the following:

- H0: There is no relationship between the two variables.
- H1: There is some relationship between the two variables.

The results showed that Sig=0,00(<0,05) which proves that gender affects objectivity. Because some expected counts were <5 (less than 5) we carried out the Monte Carlo check which verified that there is some relationship between the two variables.

Question 2: Is the person's responsible view for the appraisal subjective and how this varies according to Gender and Age?

In addition, in an attempt to check the relationship between Gender and subjectivity of the person responsible for the appraisal, we supposed that:

- H0: There is no relationship between the two variables.
- H1: There is some relationship between the two variables.

Studying the results we observe that $Sig= 0,00(0,05)$ which proves that Gender affects subjectivity. Because some expected counts were <5 (less than 5) we carried out the Monte Carlo check which verified that there is some relationship between the two variables.

In addition, in an attempt to check the relationship between Age and subjectivity of the person responsible for the appraisal, we supposed that:

- H0: There is no relationship between the two variables.
- H1: There is some relationship between the two variables.

Studying the results we observe that $Sig= 0,00(0,05)$ which proves that Age affects subjectivity. Because some expected counts were <5 (less than 5) we carried out the Monte Carlo check which verified that there is some relationship between the two variables.

Question 3: What feelings and emotions are observed in people who are under appraisal procedure?

In order to analyze the relationship between gender and the general attitude of appraised people towards appraisal systems we supposed:

- H0: There is no relationship between the two variables.
- H1: There is some relationship between the two variables.

We concluded that $Sig=0,00 (<0,05)$ which means that gender does affect the general attitude of the appraised towards the appraisal system. Because some expected counts were <5 (less than 5) we carried out the Monte Carlo check which verified that there is some relationship between the two variables.

In addition, in order to spot if a kind of relationship really exists between age and the general attitude of the appraised towards appraisal system we supposed:

- H0: There is no relationship between the two variables.
- H1: There is some relationship between the two variables.

We concluded that $Sig=0,00 (<0,05)$ which means that age does affect the general attitude of the appraised towards the appraisal system. Because some expected counts were <5 (less than 5) we carried out the Monte Carlo check which verified that there is some relationship between the two variables.

Question 4: What conditions are the most stressful during the appraisal procedure?

In addition, examining the relationship between gender and the conditions which affect appraisal and we concluded the following suppositions:

- H0: There is no relationship between the two variables.
- H1: There is some relationship between the two variables.

The results show that $Sig=0,00 (<0,05)$ which means that gender does affect the conditions which in turn affect the appraisal. Because some expected counts were <5 (less than 5) we carried out the Monte Carlo check which verified that there is some relationship between the two variables.

Finally we examined the relationship between age and the condition, which affect appraisal and we concluded the following:

Referring to the results $Sig=0,00 (<0,05)$ so the gender positively affects the conditions involved in the appraisal. Because some expected counts were <5 (less than 5) we carried out the Monte Carlo check which verified that there is some relationship between the two variables.

4. Conclusion

Taking into account the answers in *Question 1* we conclude that both gender and age respectively affect the objectivity of the appraisal system. To begin with, 46% of males asked maintain that the appraisal system is sometimes objective but other times not, which proves that objectivity is greatly affected by subjective as well as external factors. For example, the governing party as well as possible cliques in different organizations plays a major role in that. Then, 42% of males tend to question the objectivity of the appraisal system. On the other hand, 43% of females believe that the appraisal system is objective according to the situation involved, whereas a percentage of 49% of females maintain that the appraisal system is not objective. From the above, we conclude that a big percentage of both males and females consider the appraisal system either not objective or occasionally objective. This happens because the system has to do with state organizations where non-meritocracy, corruption and political parties' interference prevail. In combination with the fact that the appraised-employee is aware of the situation in the relevant organization the result is verified and perpetuated.

As far as age is concerned, the majority of the sample is between the ages 18 and 50 (66% of the people asked), 28% of whom support that the appraisal system is objective occasionally, whereas 32% of them maintain that the appraisal system is not objective. In the respective ages 25 to 35, 55% waver between objectivity and non-objectivity and 36% consider the appraisal system to be non-objective. From the above statistical data we conclude that half of the people of ages between 25 and 35 are not sure about the objectivity of the appraisal system. This could be due to the fact that they have little work experience compared with older people who are more experienced and aware of what happens in the inside. Also, younger people tend to be reluctant to be checked so they disregard this new institution.

Considering *Question 2* we realize that both males and females agree that the person who appraises subjectively affects evaluation. They also point out that there are two cases:

- when there are no pre-determined appraisal criteria
- when there is opposing attitude with the person who appraises

The 'age' factor in this question doesn't seem to differentiate and it is worth mentioning that the majority of the people in the sample are between the ages of 35 and 50.

Similar are the results which come from the 'age' variable where most of the people, in the group aged 35 to 50 with the percentage of 45% tend to be neutral to the appraisal procedure, whereas 31% of the sample is positive to the evaluation system. This demonstrates that these particular employees have become familiar with the idea of being appraised and they have accepted it. As a result, it is normal that 58% of the sample is calm or indifferent during the appraisal.

Referring to *Question 4* the answers vary and the data we collected is rather qualitative than quantitative, so analyzing it is more difficult. However the most commonly found answers are when:

1. there are cliques in the firm/organization
2. the person responsible for the appraisal doesn't have immediate contact with the person appraised
3. the aims of the firm/organization aren't fully revealed

The above are true for both males and females although the female sample is bigger than the male sample (257 females, 150 males). Considering the 'age' factor, the most answers are found between the age group 35 to 50. Respectively to the 'gender' factor, the most commonly found answers are the three above.

Finally, considering the results of the research we conclude the following: firstly, both gender and age affect the objective/subjective potential of the appraisal as well as the general attitude of the people appraised towards the appraisal system. Particularly, not only the gender but also the bigger part of the age group seem to share answers and don't differentiate. As already mentioned the survey is performed on the organizations of the Greek public sector which are characterized by non-meritocracy, influence by political parties and lack of goals. Consequently, employees appraised haven't realized the importance of an appraisal system and tend to doubt it.

However, we could suggest relevant survey in the Greek private sector. Yet, there is the possibility of biased answers since an ‘inappropriate’ answer could lead to salary reduction or even employment loss. On the other hand, the findings could describe the situation better and be more realistic since appraisal systems have been adopted in the private sector. This result in the procedure being part of the company culture and morality and the employees themselves are involved in this procedure.

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