

An Assessment of Performance Appraisal Policies in the State of
Texas

By

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Applied Research Project

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The rising STAR of Texas

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Executive Summary

Performance appraisals determine promotions, demotions, and overall performance-based accolades. As such, they are highly regarded by both employers and employees alike. Systems provide platform for the institution and the employee to determine where they fall in regard to their overall presentation. This key piece of company legislature is vital in determining the employees merit and general utility. A positive performance review could expedite an employee's prospects and upward mobility within said company. A deleterious appraisal could result in termination at worst. Despite these overwhelming prospects, one state in particular has determined that keeping employees informed of such updates negligible. In fact, the majority of Texas municipalities failed to enlighten its employees about performance appraisal processes in place. This remains true for Texas cities of all sizes. This is largely attributed to the unfortunately underwhelming motive that these imperative policies in place within the company's handbook are either omitted entirely or haphazard and unclear. Regardless, there is no appropriate excuse for such negligence. However, understanding the explanation for such ill-fated infrastructure foreshadows an ominous future for employees. Without understanding both the timeline and purpose for employee appraisals within a company, both the employee and company fail to acknowledge a crucial opportunity to align one's mission within the workspace. Without the blueprint for employee navigation into the company, they are set up for downward mobility or lateral movement at best. Personnel and organizations both need to recognize this dynamic opportunity for growth and cultivation of their mission at this fragile time in an employee's development within the company. These policies should be created with a sense of urgency, as there is no time to waste when the future of an entire workforce is at stake. In fact, nearly 66% of the sample did not have a performance appraisal policy listed in the employee handbook. This

means that a whopping two-thirds of the existing workforce in the lone star state is ill-equipped to find the policies which cover important processes needed to effectively measure their performance to enhance overall job satisfaction and upward mobility.

About the Author

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Recognizing the Importance of an Effective Performance Appraisal System:

Scenario: Lila, HR Director of Health Regencies, received repeated phone calls from managers, reporting poor performance within their department. Several managers requested 'next steps' to pursue termination. Lila repeatedly provided the same response, "Document the performance in the quarterly performance appraisal. Once the poor performance is documented, develop goals and an action plan. Follow up on the goals to determine if progress has been made. If no progress has been made after one quarter, you have documentation to support a termination request." Edwin, Finance Manager, challenged this procedure, expressing the desire to terminate an employee immediately. Lila explained he could not terminate an employee based on here says and without proper documentation. She recommended he use prior performance appraisals which provided specific examples and explanations of the poor performance. Edwin replied, "I have no past appraisals; I was never directed to conduct a performance appraisal. Furthermore, I have never received anything in writing explaining the performance appraisal process. I was unaware a process existed." Unfortunately, he was not the only one, the majority of managers were aghast – unaware of a set performance appraisal policy. Reflecting, Lila wondered how the policy could have been dismissed by so many managers – "Why were managers unaware of the organization's performance appraisal policy? It made no sense."

Lila decided to do some digging. She looked through email blasts and the organization's human resources web page, when all of a sudden it dawned on her. Management is unaware of the performance appraisal policy because the policy is not listed in the employee handbook. She

quickly realized the severity of the issue and began to write a draft of the official policy to publish in the employee handbook, where management, staff, and prospective staff could view the policy.

The scenario above illustrates the chaos likely to arise when staff is unaware of the set performance appraisal policies. This issue occurred because the performance appraisal policy was not included in the employee handbook. The policy was not relayed to management, resulting in missing documentation. In this particular situation, the missing documentation resulted in the inability to terminate an underperforming employee. A performance appraisal captures the employee's overall performance which could have been used as formal documentation to support a reason to terminate an employee. In addition, a performance evaluation could have provided a chance for the employee and manager to communicate, identify areas of improvement, and determine an action plan to improve performance. The missed opportunity led to frustration and miscommunication. Similar issues are avoidable if an effective performance appraisal policy is set and outlined in an organization's employee handbook. The policy highlights the appraisal process which includes the roles and expectations of the evaluation.

Purpose of Performance Appraisals

One major element of human resources is performance management, more specifically, effective measurement of an employee's performance. Performance appraisals play a major role in the well-being of an organization, as it measures overall performance within an organization to aid in future planning, goal setting, and expanding of an organization (Omokhudu et al., p.81, 2019). In addition, the process provides an opportunity for the employee and supervisor to communicate and work together to identify goals and an action plan that align with the organization's goal and mission (Omokhudu et al., 2019, p.82). The appraisal provides proper

documentation of an employee's performance which is necessary to promote, demote, or fire an employee. Performance appraisals provide meaning to an employee's work, as it connects their goals to the organization's overall goals and vision, providing employees with a greater purpose.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is to describe performance appraisals and to assess performance appraisal policies and processes set in cities throughout the state of Texas.

Performance management is an obstacle for many organizations; in particular, the accessibility and availability of performance appraisal policies. Unfortunately, many organizations do not have a performance policy listed in the employee handbook or on their webpage. In addition, many organizations lack a clear and concise explanation of the performance appraisal policy. Many policies are broad, difficult to interpret, do not provide an adequate amount of information, and lack essential components. Performance appraisal policies and practices need to be relayed to employees. To ensure employees are aware of the policies and practices in place, the policy must be in an accessible spot – the employee handbook. In addition, the process, type of appraisal, and feedback should be available for employee viewing at any given time (Aguinis, 2009, p.49).

Whether the policy is lacking vital information, or doesn't exist, it can cause issues to arise within an organization. Unfortunately, many cities of all sizes throughout the state of Texas do not have performance appraisal policies listed in their employee handbook. The few cities that have performance appraisal policies listed are low-quality and lack vital information. Based on the scenario above, it's evident that performance appraisal policies need to be included in employee handbooks to inform employees and managers of the processes in place.

A strong performance appraisal policy is clear, specific, covers all aspects of the process, and is readily available in the employee handbook. Ideal components of an effective performance appraisal policy have been developed to address the issue of low-quality and missing performance appraisal policies throughout the state of Texas. The ideal components of a performance appraisal system are derived from scholarly literature surrounding all aspects of performance appraisal systems, procedures, and policies. The ideal components are used to assess and rate performance appraisal policies from forty-four city's webpages from the state of Texas to determine the overall effectiveness of performance appraisal policies.

Summary of Chapters

Chapter two includes a literature review of performance appraisal policies and processes. This includes a history of performance appraisal policies and the role appraisals plays in organizations. Chapter three introduces the ideal components used to assess the performance appraisal policies in the sample. Chapter four presents the methodology used in the study. This chapter also provides the demographics of the cities used in the sample. Chapter five discusses the overall findings of the study and provides analyses based on the results. Chapter six concludes the study. This chapter provides best practices, summarizes the results, provides recommendations to human resource departments throughout the state of Texas, identifies future research opportunities, and summarizes the applied research project.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Purpose

The literature review examines scholarly literature pertaining to performance appraisals, more specifically performance appraisal policies and processes set in public organizations.

The literature review is broken down into ten major sections including: the introduction, the purpose, history and evolution of performance appraisals, introduction of relevant and key terms, the conceptual framework, responsibilities and parameters, planning and expectation setting, measurement, communication, action plans in place, and a summary of the conceptual framework.

The majority of sections have subsections. The history and evolution of performance appraisal section has three subsections which include; the history and origins of performance appraisals, evolution of appraisals, and current day practices. The introduction of relevant and key terms section has five subsections which include; performance appraisal systems, feedback forms, rating systems, system designs and format, feedback forms, and rating systems. The responsibilities and parameters section has four subsections which include; frequency of appraisals, key players defined, pertinent trainings for managers conducting appraisals, and defined tasks outlined. The planning and expectation setting section has three sections which include; defining goals and objectives, self-evaluation, and continuous process/ongoing informal appraisals throughout the year. The measurement section has three subsections which include; clear assessment mechanism, measurable rating system, and quality measures in place. The communication section has three subsections which include; delivery mechanism clear, measurable rating system, and post-appraisal discussion. Lastly, the action plan in place section

has two subsections which include; post-evaluation procedures in place and action plan and follow up.

The literature obtained and examined for this study, focus on the key elements, essential in building an effective performance appraisal system. These key elements act as criteria in determining whether or not a performance appraisal policy is effective or ineffective.

This chapter reviews literature pertaining to performance appraisals, including: the history, evolution, purpose, and key terms. Second, the criteria used to assess performance appraisal policies in cities throughout the state of Texas is presented. The criteria are developed using the literature on performance appraisals.

Role of Performance Appraisals

Performance Appraisals play a major role in the workplace. Performance Appraisals shape an organization's culture in many ways. It allows an organization to create and execute goals on a personal, team, and organizational level. It acts as the formal communication tool between employees and supervisors. Appraisals sets goals and action plans for employees. It provides opportunities for personal growth, team growth, and an organization's overall growth. Performance appraisals provide employees with a deeper understanding of how their work connects to the overall goals and mission of the organization.

History and Evolution of Performance Appraisals

Exploring the origins of performance appraisals allow organizations to understand the degree to which appraisal's content and process has evolved. It also provides the opportunity to study what has and has not worked to build their system more efficiently and effectively.

History and Origins of Performance Appraisals

Appraisals existed dating back to 206 BC, although the system was not referred to as a performance appraisal system. Some of the earliest recorded appraisals began with the Han Dynasty (Wiese and Buckley, 1998). Merit exams were distributed in order to select, promote, and make decisions within the dynasty.

Another example of early performance appraisals is the Imperial Raters, who were employed by the Wei dynasty to rate the performance of the family members (Wiese and Buckley, 1998).

Performance appraisals in industries began in the 1800s. Many industries used silent monitors, consisting of blocks of wood, placed above an employee's work station. The silent monitor was used to track an employee's progress throughout the work day (Wiese and Buckley, 1998). The blocks measured an employee's performance through colors. The block's color changed based on the amount of work produced for the day. The block was visible to all employees, in an attempt to influence employee's behavior and motivation in the workplace.

Formal appraisals began in the United States in 1813, when an Army General completed evaluations of each of his men and submitted the forms to the United States War Department. Two examples of the ratings used were "good-natured man" and "a knave despised by all" (Wiese and Buckley, 1998).

In the late 1800s, the Federal Civil Service of the U.S. began conducting merit ratings, also known as efficiency ratings. The ratings however, were not used for selection, retention, or promotion, since those powers remained with the bureau head and secretary of the department (Wiese and Buckley, 1998).

Public concern rose for an established system that measured economy and efficiency, which resulted in the creation of the Division of Efficiency, established by the Civil Service Commission in 1912 (Wiese and Buckley, 1998). By the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, appraisals were mainly utilized by military and government organizations.

The use of performance appraisals in United States industries began with salesman selection. Industrial psychologists developed a man-to-man rating system based on trait psychology (Wiese and Buckley, 1998).

Donald Paterson, a psychologist, introduced graphic-rating scales to the public psychological community. After this introduction, many modifications and innovations of rating scales and techniques emerged (Wiese and Buckley, 1998).

During this era, human resource management departments were weak, lacking resources, and knowledge needed to properly service employees. Due to the lack of understanding of the purpose and function of performance appraisal systems meant organization's decisions were made independently of, performance appraisals. Many supervisors did not take performance evaluations seriously and granted seniority-based decisions over performance-based decisions (Wiese and Buckley, 1998). The disconnect set organization's back and stunted any progress performance appraisal results would have provided.

As the concept of appraisals became more popular, the tools expanded. Global ratings and global essays began to emerge. Global ratings are a system in which the rater gives an overall estimate of performance without any differentiations among performance dimensions. Global essays are a system in which raters answer narrative questions in essay format (Wiese and Buckley, 1998). Several issues arose with these two tactics, including subjectivity and a lack of connectivity to job tasks. Following these two rating systems, the judgmental rank order

procedure emerged. Raters reported an overall evaluation of an employee's performance through checking boxes that placed employees in a percentage bracket (Wiese and Buckley, 1998). The graphic or trait rating scale became popular and is still used today. This rating system uses a numerical scale and measures personality traits, such as: leadership, initiative cooperation, and judgement.

Many of these rating systems have major errors revolving around the subjectivity of the system. Most of the ratings derived from observed behavior. Due to the major flaws of the rating systems, psychologists worked diligently to create new systems that reduced rater error and subjectivity. The forced-choice method arose, which focuses on job-related tasks and strays away from observed personality traits. The goal of this method is to reduce rater-bias and set the focus on observed behaviors, rather than on an employee's personality.

By the early 1950s, a major shift took place, welcoming new ideas regarding performance appraisals. By this time, sixty-one percent of organizations regularly used performance appraisals (Wiese and Buckley, 1998). The goal of performance appraisals was beginning to surface and spread amongst organizations. The focus shifted to the creation of performance appraisals, focused on employee development and feedback, to improve future performance of individuals and the organization (Wiese and Buckley, 1998).

Management by Objectives, an existing theory was updated and molded to fit performance appraisals by Douglas McGregor in 1957. This concept emphasizes the importance of short-term goals, rather than relying on traits. The system followed a specific regimen, carried out by the employee and manager. First, the employee develops a statement of responsibilities of his or her position. The manager reviews the statement and edits it. The employee assesses their strengths and weaknesses connected to the job tasks and develops goals based accordingly. The

manager and employee meet to ensure goals are specific, measurable, and timely (Wiese and Buckley, 1998). The goals are reviewed and rated by the employee during any evaluation period. Next, the manager and employee meet to discuss the findings of the self-evaluation. During this meeting, failures and accomplishments are discussed, new goals are set, and action plans are created.

The management by objectives approach completely redefined the performance appraisal process in many ways. First, it changed the role of the manager from a judge to a guide who aids employees in their personal development. Next, this approach focuses on employee production and the action plan set, rather than on past actions (Wiese and Buckley, 1998).

With any system, there are flaws, limitations, and short-comings. Management by Objectives requires a major commitment from managers, including intensive trainings for anyone involved in the process. This system has its limitations, it aids in performance planning and feedback but doesn't necessarily aid and guide organizations in making major administrative decisions (Wiese and Buckley, 1998).

In 1963, psychologists, Smith and Kendall developed the Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales, which replaced numerical and adjective anchors and focused on observable behavioral dimensions. An example of a high rating could be, "lecturer uses concrete examples to clarify answers" and a low rating could be, "lecturer insults or verbally attacks questioner" (Wiese and Buckley, 1998). This method is expensive, and time-consuming; research has not proven this method to be any more accurate than graphic-rating scales (Wiese and Buckley, 1998).

Another tool used to focus on behaviors is the Mixed Standard Scales (MSS), designed by Blanz and Ghiselli in 1972 (Wiese and Buckley, 1998). This tool is similar to the BARS test; however, it differs in it measures two performance dimensions instead of one. The overall focus

during this era revolved around reducing rating error. During this era, updated literature and tools emerged, yet no major progress in system changes occurred (Wiese and Buckley, 1998).

Moving forward, the focus is to increase validity, reliability, and avoid discriminability, while also accommodating to an employee and organization's needs.

Laws and Regulations Mandating Performance Appraisals

In addition to updated literature and tools, employment laws began to heavily influence the performance appraisal policy through specific mandates. Some acts that require implementation of a performance appraisal system is the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the 1966 and 1970 Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Guidelines for Regulation of Selection. These acts instill a sense of urgency in organizations to improve organizational appraisal practices and to formalize, validate, and organize appraisal systems (Wiese and Buckley, 1998).

The Uniform Guidelines in 1978 were enforced in many organizations. The mission of the Uniform Guidelines is to ensure organizations are not discriminating against any protected group through a selection device. This includes a performance appraisal, used to make personnel decisions (Wiese and Buckley, 1998).

Employment laws encompassing performance appraisal processes ensure organizations use performance appraisal processes correctly. More specifically, the laws ensure systems are based on job duties and defined in behaviors that are relevant to the job. These laws require managers to conduct rater-trainings, encourage multiple raters per appraisal in order to avoid rater-errors, and ensure managers have had ample opportunities to observe the employees under appraisal. Feedback should be frequent and formally given to the employee under appraisal. An appeals process should exist. Extreme ratings should be supported with valid documentation noting the poor ratings (Wiese and Buckley, 1998).

Evolution of Appraisals

It wasn't until later years that performance appraisal systems were designed with an organization's purpose, mission, and goals at its core. With more research, trial and errors, and samples, organizations are able to build a performance appraisal system, tied to their organization's needs. Performance appraisal systems allow an organization to view results and evaluate their past performance and plan for its future.

Performance appraisal systems, processes, and policies are consistently altering and evolving to match the ever-changing needs of the organization. The latest research and an organization's natural shifts shape the appraisal process. Changes within the system may occur for numerous reasons including but not limited to: an organization's goals, customer needs, employee needs, department changes, tasks allocation or changes, and any overall changes that occur within or outside the organization.

Current Day Practices

Processes set for performance appraisals vary organization to organization, based on an organization's needs, goals, mission, and vision. Most policies mandate supervisors to complete a performance appraisal with employees at least once a year. Some organizations outline the specifics of the performance appraisal in their employee handbook, including but not limited to; the format, frequency of appraisals, key players, and the content of the form.

Introduce Relevant and Key Terms

Many components make up a performance appraisal. Understanding the performance appraisal process entails grasping the relevant terms connected to the process.

Performance Appraisal System

A performance appraisal can be defined as “a tool used by supervisors to manage employees in a way that will induce them to work effectively for an organization by providing rewards and recognition or sanction based on each employee’s performance (Park, 2014). The goal of a performance appraisal is to improve employee performance and organizational effectiveness (Du Plessis and Van Niekerk, 2017). Performance appraisal systems formally track the progress of employees and allow them to reflect on past performance to aid in future planning and goal setting. Organizations vary in the type of process, system, and feedback utilized, yet all work towards an overall workplace improvement.

Feedback

According to the *Oxford Dictionary*, feedback can be defined as, “Information about reactions to a product, a person's performance of a task, etc. which is used as a basis for improvement.”

Feedback is an essential element of the performance appraisal process. Feedback allows employees to reflect on performance in a formal manner that inhibits growth and personal development.

Organizations vary the type of feedback given, based on the type of appraisal conducted, and the purpose of the appraisal. Each organization may require a specific type of feedback, or the type of feedback may be at the digression of the manager completing the appraisal.

Objective feedback and social comparison feedback make up the two main categories of feedback. Objective feedback reports on an employee or group’s objective work performance, compared to previous performances of the individual or group (Moon et al., 2017). Social

comparison feedback reports information on the performance of an individual or group, compared to another individual or group (Moon et al., 2017).

One popular type of feedback is 360 Degree Performance Feedback. The 360 Degree feedback system provides feedback from four major parties including: the manager, subordinate, colleague, and customer. A self-assessment rating may also be included. This type of feedback is also referred to as multi-rater feedback. 360 Degree Feedback allow multiple parties to rate an employee based on observable behaviors displayed in the workplace and on outputs produced. Providing this allows an employee to understand how all parties within an organization view his or her performance. This type of feedback is valued and highly recommended throughout many organizations because it allows an employee to see his or her performance in all contexts and from multiple perspectives. The more information an employee receives on his performance, the more likely he is to reflect on the ratings, set realistic goals, and take further initiative to make necessary changes to reach goals.

Rating Systems

The rating system measures ratings allocated to employees by managers. A sound system that yields true and accurate results is essential. Rating systems should be reliable, valid, cost-effective, and deemed fair by its users (Shields, 2016). The rating system should target or measure certain areas, including: task identity – the extent to which employees perform a cycle of tasks, task significance – the overall status and performance of a job, and autonomy – an employee’s ability to independently determine how a task will be carried out. Including these elements ensure employees are rated and measured on components essential to any organization.

System Designs and Format

Creating an effective performance appraisal system should revolve around an organization's goals, objective leading, an organization's development, customer focus, and an employee's growth (Hui and Qin-xuan (2009)).

The two major formats of performance appraisals are output-based and behavior-based (Lee, 1985). Output-based appraisals are objective and focus on what an employee produces, whereas behavior-based appraisals are subjective. Behavior-based appraisals describe acceptable behaviors, rather than employee- production measurement. (Lee, 1985). A mixture of both types of appraisals is necessary to ensure a well-balanced appraisal system.

Conclusion

Based on the literature, an ideal framework has been created. The ideal framework encompasses the different standards that make up an effective performance appraisal. The following chapter discusses the standards of the ideal framework.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework

Introduction

This chapter presents the standards that make up the practical ideal framework (Shields and Rangarajan, 2013). The framework is used to measure the effectiveness of performance appraisals in the state of Texas. The ideal framework consists of five categories, including: responsibilities and parameters, planning and expectation setting, measurement, communication, and action plan in place. The subcategories of each category are explained and discussed below.

Responsibilities and Parameters

Creating and executing an effective performance appraisal system requires all parties involved to carry out specific tasks within the pre-established parameters of the set system. Employees want a performance appraisal to meet the following conditions: a system that has been formally, properly, and regularly executed (Birecikli et al., 2016). The feedback provided should be based on observations, evidence, and reason (Birecikli et al., 2016). Honoring the set responsibilities will ensure the system is running smoothly and effectively.

Frequency of Appraisals 1.1

The frequency of appraisals is dependent on a variety of factors, including: an organization as a whole, the department, and a manager's preference. Generally, organizations may have anywhere from one to four formal appraisals per year. In addition, some organizations may use informal appraisals on a regular basis, including: informal weekly check ins, self-evaluations, department meetings, and so on.

Performance appraisals conducted annually may be time-consuming and include an excessive amount of information (Du Plessis and Van Niekerk, 2017). Performance appraisals

completed more frequently may enhance objectivity and fairness, helping employees reach their goals (Du Plessis and Van Niekerk, 2017). The more exposure employees have to appraisals, the more familiar it becomes, and the less likely it's viewed as an emotional process, but rather a part of a routine.

Key Players Defined 1.2

Generally speaking, performance appraisals managers conduct performance appraisals, however current research is expanding this role and extending this piece to employees (Park, 2014). Employee involvement and acceptance of the process is crucial in establishing and maintaining a positive work culture. Employee involvement also encourages and reinforces two-way communication between employees and supervisors. Consequently, employee-supervisor relationships strengthen. The process should not be perceived as an intimidating, punitive task carried out by supervisors. Employee perceptions regarding an organization, justice and procedures in the workplace impact employee retention (Birecikli et al., 2016). An effective performance management system provides employees an opportunity to participate in the system design (Wilton, 2016, p.193). An employee's perceived fairness of the system as a whole is important to consider in the midst of building an effective appraisal system. All players in an organization play an important role in the performance appraisal process and must be involved.

Pertinent Trainings for Managers Conducting Performance Appraisals 1.3

Carrying out a performance appraisal effectively, accurately, and ethically is a challenge. This obstacle is overcome through thorough trainings that navigate the complete performance appraisal process. The trainings should leave managers feeling confident and prepared to execute the process from start to finish.

It's unrealistic to expect supervisors to know and understand how to carry out a performance appraisal without proper training. Supervisors must be trained on the process, how it works, and what role they play (Ayers, 2015). This process must be continuously emphasized and practiced, as the process determines an organization's success or failure (Makokha et al., 2014).

Training content varies from organization to organization, however major areas covered during trainings are; the ethics behind performances appraisals, attention to rater biases and avoidance techniques, accountability, and producing objective employee ratings (Park, 2014). Roberts explains the need to offer supervisors extensive training in: goal setting, performance-standard setting, conducting interviews, providing feedback, counseling employees, managing conflict, and avoiding rating errors" (Roberts, 2002). Some common performance rating errors include: leniency, Hallow Effect, Central Tendency, Horns Effect, and Recency Effect.¹

The training should also cover ethical implications, dilemmas, and conflicts inherent in the appraisal process (Roberts, 2002) The content varies, based on an organization's mission, goals, and culture. Understanding the greater purpose allow supervisors to meaningfully evaluate employees, resulting in a high-quality, accurate performance appraisal. This type of appraisal highlights employees' accomplishments, areas of improvement, goals, and action plan.

Completing necessary training also provide supervisors with essential skills, including: performance planning, participative goal-setting, coaching, effective writing skills needed to produce performance reviews, effective interviewing skills, conflict resolution, and problem-solving skills. Employees also acquire the skills to develop realistic job descriptions, set goals, monitor personal performance, write self-appraisals, and develop career and development plans

¹ For more information on performance rating errors, please see Appendix G

(Ayers, 2015). Performance management done well, create employees who are competitive and engaged. It also enhances leadership development, supports transformational change, and in general, contributes to higher levels of performance” (Taylor and Francis, 2018, p.2). To accomplish this, supervisors must be trained on the ins and outs of the process as it relates to their organization.



Source: http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/content/socialwork/continuing-education/training-registration/online-training/_jcr_content/par/image_0.img.680.244.jpg/1407176198890.jpg

Defined Tasks Outlined 1.4

Each member of the performance appraisal process is designated to perform specific tasks in the evaluation. The tasks need to be articulated and thoroughly explained to each member, prior to the evaluation. Ayers reiterates this point, “employees must know and agree to the standards to which they are being held accountable” (Ayers, 2015).

Aside from ensuring compliance and cooperation, it also provides members with a deeper understanding of the process and their specific role in it.

Planning and Expectation Setting

Planning the specifics of a performance appraisal include the establishment of expectations and procedures prior to the evaluation. This gives employees the chance to become

comfortable with the process, and provides an opportunity to understand the inner-workings of the process before the official evaluation takes place.

Define Goals and Objectives 2.1

Defining specific goals and objectives gives the performance appraisal purpose and meaning. Goals provide the standard for feedback and performance appraisal (Taylor and Francis, 2018, p.2). Goals must be “specific, moderately difficult, and accepted (Roberts, 2002). This also lays out the bigger process for the employees. One of the first steps is determining the organization’s objectives, which trickle down to departmental and individual position objectives (Boice and Kleiner, 1997, p.197). Goals must be specific, measurable, directly relate to an employee’s daily duties, and align with the organization’s goals. Ayers reiterates this point, “when organizational goals are clearly defined, the goals can be cascaded to the individual level and attention focused on steps at the employee level to achieve the organizational goals.” When an employee understands how their individual goals relate and contribute to the organization’s goals, employees will generally work toward harder, resulting in the organization’s overall growth (Ayers, 2015). Elliot reiterates this point, “Goal-setting motives employees”, which in turn, motivates employees (Elliot, 2015, p.107).

Since performance appraisals work to meet many goals simultaneously, it is important to note the differences between goals. In this area of study, three types of goals exist including: organizational goals, rater goals, and the employee’s goals (Wiese and Buckley, 1998). Each stakeholder has a specific goal and plays a different role in the process. There are four types of uses for performance appraisals, including: between person, within person, systems maintenance, and documentation. Between person focuses on an individual’s performance. The appraisal outcomes may affect an individual’s salary, eligibility for promotions, retention, termination, and

layoffs (Wiese and Buckley, 1998). Within person focuses on feedback, specifically related to performance strengths and weaknesses, identifies areas of improvement or areas of additional training, and determines assignments and transfers. System maintenance uses refer to the organization's goals. Some examples include: workforce planning, organizational training needs, and evaluating goals on a larger scale. It also determines an organization's needs, identifies goals, and evaluates the personnel system (Wiese and Buckley, 1998). Documentation focuses on the legal requirements of the process, such as documenting personnel decisions and conducting research on the tools used to ensure compliance (Wiese and Buckley, 1998).

In noting the versatile goals of the varying stakeholders, it is important to understand the starting point of the employee, the manager and employee, the organization, and meeting legal requirements. The bottom point affects the top point and vice versa, and this needs to be taken into account during the development of goals and objectives.

Self-Evaluation 2.2

Self-evaluation is a vital part of the performance appraisal process. Allowing employees to play a significant role in their own evaluation is empowering, rewarding, and ultimately provides employees a sense of responsibility over personal performance in the workplace. In addition, employee involvement brings a sense of awareness. It provides employees a greater sense of their talents and capacities, which bring attention to potential plans and goals needed to advance their careers (Makokha, 2014, p.23). Employees have reported a sense of belonging, resulting from involvement in the work place's performance appraisal process. Employees have also shared a sense of community, involvement, and connectedness to the workplace when given the opportunity to participate in the appraisal process. Self-evaluations also provide a chance to self-reflect and focus on individual goal-setting (Marume, 2016, p.37). This provides employees

a chance to critically review their own performance, which is likely to increase their acceptance towards the feedback provided by their supervisor (Wilton, 2016, p.189). There are many ways to involve employees in the performance appraisal process. This can be done by delegating active roles to employees, including: job-task determination, defining job objectives, and identifying the best methods to perform jobs tasks (Anstey, et al., 2017, p.17). This clarifies what an employee is rated on and ensures both parties agree on the tasks observed and measured. Allowing an employee to take an active role in the process leads to a more accurate appraisal than one that does not take an employee's opinion into consideration (Anstey, et al., 2017, p.17).



Source: <https://cdn5.employeeconnect.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/self-evaluation-phrases.png>

Continuous Process/Ongoing Informal Appraisals 2.3

Continuously evaluating employee performance, reflecting on feedback, and reviewing work performance is the key to an effective performance appraisal system. Taylor and Francis reiterate this point, “Performance management is not a fixed sequence of events but a continuous process that is constantly renewing itself as performance unfolds, especially as key events create

opportunities to demonstrate expertise and contribute to organizational goals (Taylor and Francis, 2018, p.2). Monitoring performance needs to be a part of the daily routine (Marume, 2014, p.39). The nature of the performance appraisal varies in its formality, format, and delivery. For example, employers may choose to conduct a monthly informal check-in with employees, and conduct a formal evaluation bi-annually. This allows both parties to adjust to the ongoing process, and ideally become more comfortable participating in the appraisals. When employees view performance appraisals as a norm, they are more likely to open up take part in the process.

Formal performance appraisals are often referred to as ‘higher appraisals’ and informal appraisals as ‘low appraisals’ (Hui and Qin-xuan, 2009). The higher appraisals take place less frequently than low appraisals.

The tools used for the appraisals vary, but the frequency should be consistent and part of an organization’s routine. Incorporating performance evaluation into the daily routine promotes personal development, reinforces desired standards, and aids in conflict resolution (Wilton, 2016, p.187).

Measurement

Effective appraisal systems require a clear, concise, and objective measuring system that accurately measure an employee’s performance. Organizations rely on the measurement system to provide results that indicate where employees are, and where the organization is performing as a whole. The results of performance appraisals are used to make decisions about promotions, distribution of pay and rewards, transfer and termination of contract, career planning, and goal setting (Birecikli et al., 2016). In order to create a sound measurement system, a clear assessment mechanism and measurable rating system need to be in place.

Clear Assessment Mechanism 3.1

A clear assessment mechanism is essential to deliver accurate evaluations. This tool is one way to aid in carrying out fair and ethical evaluations. Employees should be informed and aware of the assessment mechanism used to measure performance. The assessment mechanism should align with what its measuring. Supervisors assess how well the inputs outlined for employees match the outputs produced (Shields, 2016). The outputs must be evaluated in an objective manner (Wilton, 2016, p.180).

Measurable Rating System 3.2

The system should measure what it was designed to measure. Measurement is not as simple as “high” or “low”, rather it is based on the organization and the type of appraisal in use (Shields et al., 2016). The performance appraisal should be objective and measurable or subjective with sound evidence to back it up. The criteria used to evaluate an employee must be measurable. The measurement system must have clear, well-defined performance levels which employees can realistically achieve (Boice and Kleiner, 1997, p.199). Credible measures that provide expected results, distinctions in levels of performance, consequences for action and non-action, employee involvement, feedback and dialogue, and training is needed to deliver an effective performance appraisal system (Ayers, 2015). A credible measurement system is valid and provides reliable and controllable measures tailored to a position (Ayers, 2015). Many techniques and methods to evaluate employee’s performance exist. Some methods include: graphic rating scales, Field Review Method, Forced Choice Rating method, Critical Incident Appraisal Method, Management by Objectives, Work Standard Approach, raking methods, alteration methods, alteration ranking, paired comparison, person to person rating, checklist,

behaviorally anchored rating scales, and assessment centers (Marume et al., 2016). ²A reliable measure produces consistent results and the results of a controllable measure is heavily influenced by an individual (Ayers, 2015).



Source: <http://www.healthcarebusinesstech.com/wp-content/uploads/95616995-300x300.jpg>

Quality Measures in Place 3.3

Ensuring the use of high-quality measures is important because the appraisals “evaluate goal attainment and is a basis for ongoing feedback, development planning, and continuous performance improvement (Taylor and Francis, 2018, p. 2).” To obtain this information, a quality measurement system must be in place. A quality measure is “reliable, valid, and accurate (DeNisi and Murphy, 2017, p.424).

Communication

Clear two-way communication is necessary to convey the appraisal process. The supervisor and employee must be on the same page, understand each other’s roles, and feel comfortable to

² For more information on the techniques and methods used in performance appraisals, please see Appendix F

discuss findings. Strong communication can be reached with a clear delivery mechanism, a specific feedback form, and a post-appraisal discussion.

Delivery Mechanism Clear 4.1

Driving change starts with communicating the process and results of a performance appraisal. Boice and Kleiner write about the importance of communication stating, “at a basic level, without adequate communication between the employee and supervisor, undesirable work habits may be formed or good work habits may be modified. Lack of such communication may be viewed by the employee as approval of their current work habits or performance” (Boice and Kleiner, 1994, p.197). Supervisors must clearly inform employees of the specific mechanism used to deliver the results of the appraisal. The appraisal provides an opportunity for employees and managers to communicate. The evaluation also gives an employee an opportunity to better understand their role and daily functions (Marume, 2016, p.33). Communicating the results of the appraisal is a major component of the appraisal process.

Feedback Form 4.2

Feedback can be defined as “the common thread stitching together all the elements of the process (Taylor and Francis, 2018, p.2).” Research has indicated there is a link between performance appraisal feedback and increased productivity and enhanced employee motivation (Ayers, 2015). In addition, effective feedback provides supervisors with the opportunity to identify barriers that may affect performance and provide guidance on career development (Shields et al., 2016, p.3). It’s important to provide specific, clear, and task focused feedback as the feedback provided drives decision making in organizations. Organizations use feedback to determine specific changes needed within the organization (Marume, 2014, p.39). Top management can determine the overall strengths and weaknesses of the organization and determine which direction the

organization will go in. Feedback is an essential and meaningful part of the performance appraisal process.

Organizations must identify the specific artifact used to provide feedback to its employees. The type of feedback used by organizations vary, however, all types of feedback must be perceived as credible by employees. Source credibility is based on three components, including: trust, expertise, and goodwill (Westernman et al., 2018). Employees are more likely to become influenced and make improvements when presented with credible feedback methods.

Post-Appraisal Discussion 4.3

First, supervisors will discuss the results of the appraisal with the supervisor. This is generally the beginning of a typical post-appraisal discussion. The focus on past events must be minimized and future goals and actions must be presented. At this point, employees and supervisors should develop specific goals and action plans to achieve goals.

The tasks ranked or considered ‘areas of improvement’ will be the areas of focus for the upcoming evaluation. The conversation will target: goals, ways to measure the goals, time-frames to achieve the goals, and follow-up dates (Shields et al., 2016). Like any portion of the appraisal, the employee should take an active role in the conversation – this includes making suggestions to increase efficiency or job satisfaction (Anstey, et al., 2017, p.17). Employee involvement ensures higher engagement and commitment levels because they are involved in decision-making that affects their daily work (Ayers, 2015). The discussion also needs to reflect on the potential for development, tailored to an employee’s individual appraisal results (Marume, 2014, p.35). The post-appraisal discussion is vital, as it leads to an action plan.



Source: <https://hr.sparkhire.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/The-Do%E2%80%99s-and-Don%E2%80%99ts-of-Talking-About-Pay-Raises.jpg>

Action Plan in Place

A performance appraisal process does not end after the evaluation and feedback is completed. The performance appraisal process is an ongoing process, with many steps. An important step in the process is ensuring procedures and protocols are in place post-appraisal. A tangible procedure following an appraisal is an action plan.

Post-Evaluation Procedures in Place 5.1

Action plans begin with goal-setting, based on findings of the evaluation. Post-evaluation procedures must be established. The follow-up needs to occur in a timely and formal manner. Often times, the focus is to formalize the initial performance appraisal but organizations neglect to formalize the post-evaluation procedures, a vital step in the process. Without a post-evaluation procedure in place, the initial performance appraisal conducted is ineffective.

Performance appraisals need to create meaning for each employee - regardless of the findings. Expectancy theory believes linking performance and award is motivating, as it allows employees to see the link between their actions and the results of their performance, as it relates

to awards (Ayers, 2015). This gives employees an idea of the consequences for non-performance and for extraordinary performance (Ayers, 2015).

Part of the process includes educating employees on available resources available within the organization. An employee should know where to turn to for guidance or help, specifically relating to the performance appraisal (Anstey, et al., 2017, p.17).

Action Plan and Follow up 5.2

The process does not end with the initial performance appraisal. The initial appraisal answers the question of “how am I doing?” and the post-appraisal discussion and action plan answers the question of “Where do I go from here?”, yet this is the question that is often dismissed by organizations (Kindall and Gatza, 2010).

Supervisors and employees must work together to establish an action plan, according to an organization’s post-appraisal policy. After discussing the findings of the performance appraisal results, the employee and manager will determine goals moving forward. It is important to create an action plan that is “adaptable to changes in the circumstances of the organization, such as how an employee responds to the set plan” (Anstey, et al., 2017, p.18). These goals are based on the results of the performance appraisal, reflecting on areas of improvement. Once these goals have been established, the employee and manager must determine checkpoints, meaning “appropriate points at which progress can be evaluated”, which varies based on the goals being set (Kindall and Gatza, 2010). Some policies may include appropriate time-frames for follow up time-frames, but often times this is determined between the employee and supervisor.

The supervisor must determine and relay to the employee checkpoints will be measured (Kindall and Gatza, 2010).

Following the creation of the check-points system, the employee and manager will meet as discussed to check the results. During this time, the employee and manager meet to review the results and discuss the progress made. The importance does not lie in whether or not the goal was met, but in the progress towards the goal (Kindall and Gatza, 2010).

This step provides an opportunity to build the employee-manager relationship because managers recognize and acknowledge the employee's progress made outside of the formal appraisal period.

Another plan is developed, depending on the results of the check-point meeting. These steps play into the cycle of the continuous appraisal process.

Conceptual Framework:

The table below includes the criteria that make up the ideal components of a performance appraisal policy. The ideal framework includes five standards, which include: responsibilities and parameters, planning and expectation setting, measurement, communication, and action plan in place. Each standard has anywhere from two to four sub-standards. The responsibilities and parameters standard consists of four sub-standards, which include: frequency of appraisals, key players defined, pertinent trainings for managers conducting appraisals in place, and defined tasks outlined. The second standard, planning and expectation setting includes three sub-standards, which include: define goals and objectives, self-evaluation, and continuous process/ongoing informal appraisals throughout the year. The third standard, measurement, includes three sub-standards, which include: clear assessment mechanism, measurable rating system, and quality measures in place. The fourth standard, communication includes: delivery mechanism clear, feedback form, and post-appraisal discussion. The last standard, action plan in place includes post-evaluation procedures in place, and action plan/follow up. The sources used

to explain each category is listed next to the standard. In addition, the title, purpose of the study and cities used in the sample are outlined.

Conceptual Framework: Table 2.1	
Title: Performance Appraisal Policy in cities across the state of Texas: An Ideal Framework and Assessment of Performance Appraisal Policy	
Purpose: The purpose of this research is to describe performance appraisals and to assess performance appraisal policies and processes set in cities throughout the state of Texas.	
Extra Large Cities: City of Houston, City of San Antonio, City of Dallas, City of Austin, City of Fort Worth, City of El Paso	
Large Cities: City of Abilene, City of Arlington, City of Brownsville, City of Corpus Christi, City of Frisco, City of Grand Prairie, City of Killeen, City of Lubbock, City of McKinney, City of Midland, City of Plano, City of Wichita Falls	
Medium Cities: City of Bedford, City of Bryan, City of Conroe, City of Duncanville, City of Friendswood, City of Harker Heights, City of Kyle, City of Lewisville, City of Missouri, City of Pearland, City of Rosenberg, City of Schertz, City of Temple, City of Waxahachie	
Small Cities: City of Alton, City of Bellaire, City of Canyon, City of Dickinson, City of Gainesville, City of Highland Village, City of La Marque, City of Midlothian, City of Port Lavaca, City of Sachse, City of Stephenville, City of Vernon	
<i>Descriptive Categories</i>	<i>Supporting Literature</i>
<i>Key elements that should be in a performance appraisal</i>	
1. Responsibilities and Parameters	
<i>1.1 Frequency of Appraisals</i>	<i>Du Plessis and Van Niekerk 2017</i>
<i>1.2 Key Players Defined</i>	<i>Park, 2014, Birecikli et al., 2016, Wilton, 2016</i>
<i>1.3 Pertinent Trainings for Managers Conducting Appraisals in Place</i>	<i>Ayers, 2015, Makokha et al., 2014, Omokhudu and Olade, 2019, Park, 2014, Roberts, 2002, Taylor and Francis, 2018</i>
<i>1.4 Defined Tasks Outlined</i>	<i>Ayers, 2015</i>
2. Planning and Expectation Setting	
<i>2.1 Define Goals and Objectives</i>	<i>Ayers, 2015, Elliot, 2015, Taylor and Francis, 2018, Roberts, 2002, Boice and Kleiner, 1997, Wiese and Buckley, 1998</i>
<i>2.2 Self Evaluation</i>	<i>Anstey, et al., 2017, Makokha, 2014, Marume, 2016, Wilton, 2016</i>
<i>2.3 Continuous Process/Ongoing Informal Appraisals throughout the year</i>	<i>Marume, 2014, Taylor and Francis, 2018, Hui and Qin-xuan, 2009, Wilton, 2016</i>
3. Measurement	
<i>3.1 Clear Assessment Mechanism</i>	<i>Shields, 2016, Wilton, 2016</i>
<i>3.2 Measureable Rating System</i>	<i>Ayers, 2015, Boice and Kleiner, Marume et al., 2016, 1997, Shields et al., 2016</i>
<i>3.3 Quality Measures in Place</i>	<i>Taylor and Francis, 2018, DeNisi and Murphy, 2017</i>
4. Communication	
<i>4.1 Delivery Mechanism Clear</i>	<i>Boice and Kleiner, 1994, Marume, 2016</i>
<i>4.2 Feedback Form (artifact, discussion)</i>	<i>Ayers, 2015, Marume, 2014, Taylor and Francis, 2018, Shields et al. 2016, Westernman et al., 2018</i>

<i>4.3 Post Appraisal Discussion</i>	<i>Ayers, 2015, Shields et al., 2016, Anstey, et al., 2017</i>
5. Action Plan in Place	
<i>5.1 Post-Evaluation Procedures in Place</i>	<i>Ayers, 2015, Anstey, et al., 2017, Marume, 2014</i>
<i>5.2 Action Plan and Follow up</i>	<i>Kindall and Gatza, 2010, Anstey, et al., 2017</i>

Summary of the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework designed for this applied research project derived from the literature gathered, studied, and analyzed on effective performance appraisal systems and processes (Shields and Tajalli, 2006). After reviewing scholarly resources on this topic, ideal components were developed to capture the necessary components needed to create an effective performance appraisal system and process. The framework is designed to rate performance appraisal policies included in employee handbooks.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Purpose

This chapter describes the research methodology used to evaluate the effectiveness of performance appraisal policies throughout the state of Texas against the ideal framework. The methodology used is broken down into six areas. The first area covers the research methods used for the study. Secondly, the coding sheet used to obtain data is explained. Third, coding decisions are presented and explained. Fourth, the map of Texas and its areas are presented and an explanation of cities chosen are given. Fifth, the strengths and weaknesses of the methodology are examined. Lastly, the method used to sample city performance appraisal policies is discussed.

Research Methods

This study uses content analysis of performance appraisal policies to assess Texas city's performance appraisal policies listed in employee handbooks. Content analysis is defined as a "method of analysis" and more specifically "a method of observation. Instead of observing people's behavior directly, or asking them to respond to scales, or interviewing them, the investigator takes the communications that people have produced and asks questions of the communications (Kerlinger, 1964, p. 544). The process consists of four stages, including: de-contextualization, re-contextualization categorization, and finally compilation (Bengtsson, 2016, p.9). Furthermore, this methodology focuses on the signs and symbols, which act as units of analysis. Content analysis is the study of the message itself, and not the communicator or audience (Kassarjian, 1977, p. 8). The "message" in this study are performance appraisal policies. This particular study consists of observations of performance appraisal policies. The policies listed on employer's web pages act as the existing products of communication, also

referred to as the units for the content analysis. Content Analysis requires objective units of analysis so other researchers may apply the content and produce the same results (Kassarjian, 1977, p.8). Providing objectivity gives scientific standing to this methodology.

The primary method of research was obtained through internet searches of the city's webpage. The performance appraisal policies can be found in the city's employee handbook. If the policy is not automatically listed in the employee handbook, the next step is to search throughout the city's webpage, using keywords such as "performance appraisal", "performance management", "employee evaluation", The availability and open access to the performance appraisal policies allow the researcher to obtain information cost-effectively. Content Analysis can be used on any type of written text, regardless of the origin (Bengtsson, 2016, p.10).



Source: https://seeklogo.com/images/S/State_seal_of_Texas-logo-37285DBF31-seeklogo.com.png

Operationalization Table

The coding sheet listed below in Table 3.1 presents the descriptive categories which should be included in a performance appraisal policy. The first column displays the five descriptive categories and the accompanying subcategories. The first category listed is responsibilities and parameters and it holds four subsections which include: frequency of

appraisals, key players defined, pertinent trainings for managers conducting appraisals in place, and defined tasks outlined. The second category listed displays the planning/expectation setting and the subcategories are defining goals and objectives, self-evaluation, and continuous process/ongoing informal appraisals throughout the year. The third category listed frames measurement and its three subcategories, which include: clear assessment mechanism, measurable rating system, and quality measures in place. The fourth category listed displays communication and it has three subcategories which include: delivery mechanism clear, feedback form, and post-appraisal discussion. The fifth and last category listed on the coding sheet provides the action plan in place and it has two subcategories which include post-evaluation procedures in place and action plan/follow up (Shields and Rangarajan, 2013).

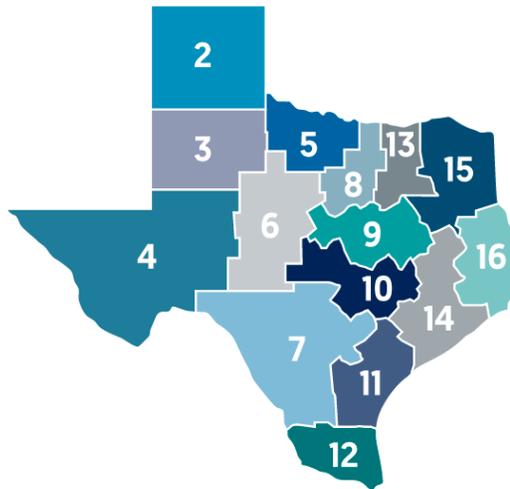
Table 3.1: Operationalization Table	
Title: Performance Appraisal Policy in cities across the state of Texas: An Ideal Framework and Assessment of Performance Appraisal Policy	
Purpose: The purpose of this research is to describe performance appraisals and to assess performance appraisal policies and processes set in cities throughout the state of Texas.	
Extra Large Cities: City of Houston, City of San Antonio, City of Dallas, City of Austin, City of Fort Worth, City of El Paso	
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Small Cities: City of Alton, City of Bellaire, City of Canyon, City of Dickinson, City of Gainesville, City of Highland Village, City of La Marque, City of Midlothian, City of Port Lavaca, City of Sachse, City of Stephenville, City of Vernon	
Categories:	Levels of Measurement:
1.Responsibilities and Parameters	
1.1 Frequency of Appraisals	Not Included, Insufficient, Sufficient, Well Done
1.2 Key Players Defined	Not Included, Insufficient, Sufficient, Well Done
1.3 Pertinent Trainings for Managers Conducting Appraisals in Place	Not Included, Insufficient, Sufficient, Well Done
1.4 Defined Tasks Outlined	Not Included, Insufficient, Sufficient, Well Done

2. Planning and Expectation Setting	
2.1 Define Goals and Objectives	Not Included, Insufficient, Sufficient, Well Done
2.2 Self Evaluation	Not Included, Insufficient, Sufficient, Well Done
2.3 Continuous Process/Ongoing Informal Appraisals Throughout the Year	Not Included, Insufficient, Sufficient, Well Done
3. Measurement	
3.1 Clear Assessment Mechanism	Not Included, Insufficient, Sufficient, Well Done
3.2 Measurable Rating System	Not Included, Insufficient, Sufficient, Well Done
3.3 Quality Measures in Place	Not Included, Insufficient, Sufficient, Well Done
4. Communication	
4.1 Delivery Mechanism Clear	Not Included, Insufficient, Sufficient, Well Done
4.2 Feedback Form (eg. artifact, discussion)	Not Included, Insufficient, Sufficient, Well Done
4.3 Post Appraisal Discussion	Not Included, Insufficient, Sufficient, Well Done
5. Action Plan in Place	
5.1 Post-Evaluation Procedures in Place	Not Included, Insufficient, Sufficient, Well Done
5.2 Action Plan and Follow up	Not Included, Insufficient, Sufficient, Well Done

Levels of Alignment

Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done
Not in document	Item is briefly mentioned in document	Item is included in document and thoroughly discussed	Item is mentioned in document, thoroughly discussed and is clear and comprehensible

Figure 3.2 Region Map: Texas Municipal League Regions



Region 2	Amarillo Area
Region 3	Caprock—Lubbock Area
Region 4	Permian Basin Region—Odessa Area
Region 5	Red River Valley—Wichita Falls Area
Region 6	Hub of Texas—Abilene Area
Region 7	Alamo Region—San Antonio Area
Region 8	Where the West Begins—Fort Worth Area
Region 9	Heart of Texas Region—Waco Area
Region 10	Highland Lakes Region—Austin Area
Region 11	Coastal Bend Region—Corpus Christi Area
Region 12	Lower Rio Grande Valley—Rio Grande Valley Area
Region 13	North Central Texas Region—Dallas Area
Region 14	San Jacinto Region—Houston Area
Region 15	Tyler—Longview Area
Region 16	Golden Pine & Oil Region—Beaumont—Lufkin Area

Source: <http://www.tml.org/regions>

Coding Decisions

The policies are coded to organize the data so it is divided by categories and furthermore by its variable within the category. The coding system is designed to create an easy and comprehensible way to examine, interpret, and analyze the data. Each policy is coded using the fifteen variables. The coding sheet has coding categories used to measure the extent to which the variables are present in a policy. The coding category consists of ratings zero to four. Zero represents “not included” which means the item does not appear in the document. One represents “insufficient” which means the item is briefly mentioned in the document. Two represents “sufficient” which means the item is included in the document and thoroughly discussed. Three represents “well done” which means the item is mentioned in the document, thoroughly discussed and is clear and comprehensible.

Strengths and Weaknesses

The main strength of this study is the research method used. Content analysis is a strong research method for examining pre-existing appraisals and policies. Researchers, Berelson, Fearing, Holsti, Paisley, Budd, Thorpe, Donohew, Kerlinger, Lasswell, Lerner, and Pool all agree “the distinguishing characteristics of content analysis are that it must be objective, systematic, and quantitative” (Kassarjian, 1977, p.9). The conceptual framework was built systematically, with the literature as its backbone. The findings are easily quantifiable, making the results objective and easier to comprehend.

Inevitably, this study has some weaknesses. The ideal framework created lacks multiple perspectives and creators, meaning it is based on one researcher’s idea of what an effective performance appraisal entails. In addition, the ratings of performance appraisal policies are subjective, as it is based on one researcher’s opinion. The ratings lack multiple perspectives and

opinions, which would bring more validity to the ratings. Unfortunately, some cities do not have performance appraisal policies posted on their webpages so it is difficult for a researcher to determine if there is no performance policy in place or if the policy exists but is not posted on the city's webpage.

Data Collection

The performance appraisal policies used in this study are available online, specifically on the city's human resources webpage. This study applies a systematic and stratified technique using a random start to collect data. Systematic sampling is used to perform content analysis on forty-four performance appraisal policies within the state of Texas. In order to ensure the sample encompasses all population sizes, the study captures data from extra-large, large, medium, and small cities in the state of Texas. The specific sample of cities used is adopted from a previous content analysis conducted by Wiora Sheila, a Texas State University graduate. Forty-four cities in Texas are used in this study. According to the 2010 US Census Bureau Report, the state of Texas has 1,753 cities with populations ranging between 10,000 and 2.1 million (State and County Quick Facts 2015).

Samples

Table 3.3: Extra Large Cities and Demographics

Extra-Large Population Averages			
City Name	Population Size (2017 Population Estimate)	Region	Performance Appraisal Available on Webpage (Y=Yes, N=No)
Houston	2,312,717	14	Y
San Antonio	1,591,946	7	N
Dallas	1,341,075	13	N
Austin	950,715	10	Y
Fort Worth	874,168	8	Y
El Paso	840,410	4	Y
Average	1,318,505		67% Y

Table 3.4: Large-Sized Cities and Demographics

Large Population Averages			
City Name	Population Size (2017 Population Estimate)	Region	Performance Appraisal Available on Webpage (Y=Yes, N=No)
Abilene	121,885	6	N
Arlington	396,394	8	Y
Brownsville	183,299	12	N
Corpus Christi	325,605	11	Y
Frisco City	177,286	13	N
Grand Prairie	193,837	8	Y
Killeen	145,482	9	N
Lubbock	305,225	3	N
McKinney	181,330	13	Y
Midland	165,049	4	N
Plano	286,143	13	Y
Wichita Falls	104,747	5	N
Average	220,112		42% Y

Table 3.5: Medium-Sized Cities and Demographics

Medium Population Averages			
City Name	Population Size (2017 Population Estimate)	Region	Performance Appraisal Available on Webpage (Y=Yes, N=No)
Bedford	49,486	8	N
Bryan	84,021	10	N
Conroe	84,378	14	N
Duncanville	39,487	13	N
Friendswood	39,839	14	N
Harker Heights	31,075	9	N
Kyle	43,480	10	N
Lewisville	106,021	13	N
Missouri	74,497	14	Y
Pearland	119,940	14	N
Rosenburg	37,661	14	N
Schertz	40,092	7	N
Temple	74,503	9	Y
Waxahachie	35,340	9	N
Average	61,416		14% Y

Table 3.6: Small-Sized Cities and Demographics

Small Population Averages			
City Name	Population Size (2017 Population Estimate)	Region	Performance Appraisal Available on Webpage (Y=Yes, N=No)
Alton	17,278	12	N
Bellaire	18,797	14	N
Canyon	15,306	2	N
Dickinson	20,359	14	N
Gainesville	16,419	8	N
Highland Village	16,587	13	Y
La Marque	16,766	14	N
Midlothian	25,254	13	Y
Port Lavaca	12,212	11	Y
Sachse	25,937	13	N
Stephenville	20,797	8	Y
Vernon	10,346	5	N
Average	18,005		33% Y

Statistics

The findings were evaluated using descriptive statistics. More specifically a mean and frequency distribution were used, in addition to cross tabulation to describe how effective performance appraisal policies are in the state of Texas.

Summary

In short, the methodology chapter examines content analysis and what it entails. The ratings system is presented and thoroughly explained. Lastly, the sample used is shown. This chapter also covers the strengths and weaknesses of the study. The following chapter delves into the results and findings of the study. Recommendations are presented for city human resources staff who work to improve performance appraisal processes for its employees.

Chapter 5: Results/Findings

Purpose

This chapter provides the results of the content analysis conducted on performance appraisals throughout the state of Texas. This chapter covers the findings beginning with the overall results and moving into the results based on a city's population size. The figures included provide the full results of the study, followed by the key findings sections, which provide the main highlights. The chapter ends with an example of a high-quality performance appraisal policy chosen from the sample.

Performance Appraisal Policy Analysis

The biggest finding in this study is the number of missing performance appraisal policies in employee handbooks. Nearly 66% of the sample did not have a performance appraisal policy listed in the employee handbook. On occasion, some of these city websites included information on performance management. For example, the city of Dallas included a power point covering effective performance management strategies, however the power point did not include a policy and the presentation was outdated. It's difficult to determine whether some of the cities in the sample have a performance appraisal process in place, as this study only assesses policies listed in employee handbooks. Regardless, it is concerning so many cities throughout the state of Texas do not have a performance appraisal policy listed in the employee handbook, where many other policies live. Throughout the assessment, many policies regarding benefits, leave time, and attendance were thoroughly, clearly, and explicitly outlined in the employee handbook. Performance management makes up an essential component of the human resource business functions and should be given proper attention and care, as it ultimately determines an organization's goals and outcomes.

Findings Breakdown

The findings below include each category and its subcategories separated by the rating received (not included, insufficient, sufficient, well done). The numbers displayed reveal the number of appraisal policies per rating category. The percentages listed in the tables below provide the percentage of policies that received a particular rating.

Overview of Key Findings

Of the 44 cities in the sample, only 15 have performance appraisal policies posted in its city's employee handbook. Overall, the highest percentage of ratings fell into the 'not included' category with 'insufficient' as the second highest percentage. Less than 10% of appraisal policies measured, ranked 'well done' and less than 15% measured ranked 'sufficient'. Over 70% of ratings fell within the 'not included' category. The remaining ratings fell into the 'insufficient' or 'sufficient' category, meaning the content is briefly mentioned but lacks a thorough explanation. In short, the majority of Texas city appraisal policies lack vital information in all the categories of the ideal framework. Although the majority of the overall findings fell into the 'not included' category, variances existed amongst the various population sizes measured. Based on these findings, it is apparent the majority of Texas cities fail to inform their employees about vital information pertaining to their performance appraisal systems.

Table 4.1: Overall Findings

Overall City Findings					
Responsibilities and Parameters	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 44
1.1 Frequency of Appraisals	70.4%	15.9%	6.9%	6.9%	100%
1.2 Key Players Defined	72.8%	15.9%	4.6%	6.9%	100%
1.3 Pertinent Trainings for Managers Conducting Appraisals in Place	88.7%	6.9%	2.2%	2.2%	100%
1.4 Defined Tasks Outlined	77.2%	13.7%	6.9%	2.2%	100%
Average Percentage per Category:	77%	13%	5%	5%	100%
Planning and Expectation Setting	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N=44
2.1 Define Goals and Objectives	75%	9%	11.3%	4.6%	100%
2.2 Self-Evaluation	95.4%	4.6%	0%	0%	100%
2.3 Continuous Process/Ongoing Informal Appraisals Throughout the Year	81.9%	15.9%	2.2%	0%	100%
Average Percentage per Category:	84%	10%	5%	2%	100%
Measurement	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N=44

3.1 Clear Assessment Mechanism	88.7%	11.3%	0%	0%	100%
3.2 Measurable Rating System	95.4%	4.6%	0%	0%	100%
3.3 Quality Measures in Place	90%	6.9%	2.2%	0%	100%
Average Percentage per Category:	92%	8%	1%	0%	100%
Communication	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N=44
4.1 Delivery Mechanism Clear	84%	15.9%	0%	0%	100%
4.2 Feedback Forms (e.g. artifact, discussion)	88.7%	4.6%	6.9%	0%	100%
4.3 Post Appraisal Discussion	79.6%	13.7%	4.6%	2.2%	100%
Average Percentage per Category:	84%	11%	4%	1%	100%
Action Plan in Place	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N=44
5.1 Post-Evaluation Procedures in Place	79.6%	9%	15.9%	0%	100%
5.2 Action Plan and Follow-up	79.6%	13.7%	6.9%	0%	100%
Average Percentage per Category:	80%	8%	6%	0%	100%

The data above provides the rating percentage the policies fell into per category. 5% of policies fell into the ‘well done’ category of responsibilities/parameters and 2% into planning/expectation setting and only 1% scored ‘well done’ in the communication category.

Over 75% of the policies fell into ‘not included’ in the five categories. Less than 10% of the policies fell into the ‘sufficient’ category in every category. Overall, the findings indicate the majority of policies did not meet the criteria outlined in the ideal framework. The sections below review the findings by population size, beginning with the extra-large sized population.

Extra-Large Sized City Key Findings

Six extra-large cities performance appraisal policies were examined and rated against the ideal framework. The six extra-large sized cities include: Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, Austin, Fort Worth, and El Paso. Amongst the extra-large cities examined, only 67% have performance appraisal policies listed in the employee handbook. San Antonio and Dallas do not have performance appraisal policies listed. 50% of the sample falls into the ‘not included’ category, meaning there is no mention of the standard. A little under 20% of the sample was rated ‘well done’ in the responsibilities and parameters category. 0% of the policies were rated ‘sufficient’ or ‘well done’ under the measurement category.

Table 4.2: Extra-Large Sized Cities Overall Findings

Extra-Large Sized Cities Overall Findings					
Responsibilities and Parameters	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 6
1.1 Frequency of Appraisals	3	1	1	1	6
1.2 Key Players Defined	3	1	1	1	6
1.3 Pertinent Trainings for Managers Conducting Appraisals in Place	5	0	0	1	6
1.4 Defined Tasks Outlined	3	2	0	1	6

Total:	58.33%	16.67%	16.67%	16.67%	100.00%
Planning and Expectation Setting	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 6
2.1 Define Goals and Objectives	3	1	1	1	6
2.2 Self-Evaluation	5	1	0	0	6
2.3 Continuous Process/Ongoing Informal Appraisals Throughout the Year	4	1	1	0	6
Total:	66.67%	16.67%	11.11%	5.56%	100.00%
Measurement	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 6
3.1 Clear Assessment Mechanism	5	1	0	0	6
3.2 Measurable Rating System	5	1	0	0	6
3.3 Quality Measures in Place	4	1	0	0	6
Total:	77.78%	16.67%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Communication	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 6
4.1 Delivery Mechanism Clear	5	1	0	0	6
4.2 Feedback Forms (eg. artifact, discussion)	4	1	1	0	6
4.3 Post Appraisal Discussion	4	1	0	1	6
Total:	72.22%	16.67%	5.56%	6.00%	100.00%

Action Plan in Place	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 6
5.1 Post-Evaluation Procedures in Place	3	1	2	0	6
5.2 Action Plan and Follow-up	4	1	1	0	6
Total:	58.33%	16.67%	25.00%	0.00%	100.00%

The table below displays the overall percentage of ratings extra-large sized city's policies received per standard. Overall, responsibilities and parameters are not included in the policies in the sample 58.33% of the time. Furthermore, the policy is insufficient in this category over 16% of the time, and rated sufficient around 16% of the time. Under around 16% of the policies in the sample are rated 'well done' in this category. Based on the sample, the planning and expectation setting is not included over half the time and insufficient over 16%, sufficient around 16% of the time, and ranked well done in over 10% of policies. The sample did not meet the measurement standard, as it did not include measurement over 70% of the time, and the remaining 16% of policies is ranked insufficient. Similarly, the communication standard was not included in over 70% of policies and around 16% of policies have insufficient communication. Only around 5% ranked sufficient and 6% well done. The last standard is action plan in place and over half the policies did not include an action plan. Under 20% of policies ranked insufficient, and the remaining fell into the sufficient category, with zero percent in the well-done range. Based on the findings, it is evident the extra-large sized population's policies do not include the necessary standards for an effective performance appraisal policy in over 50% of the sample. The next section delves into the findings of large-sized populations.

Large-Sized City Key Findings

Twelve large cities performance appraisal policies were examined and rated using the ideal framework. The twelve large-sized cities include: Abilene, Arlington, Brownsville, Corpus Christi, Frisco City, Grand Prairie, Killeen, Lubbock, McKinney, Midland, Plano, and Wichita Falls. Amongst the twelve cities, only five have performance appraisal policies in the city's employee handbook. Four of the standards including pertinent trainings for managers conducting appraisals in place, clear assessment mechanism, measurable rating system, and quality measures in place were not included in 100% of the policies examined. Over 50% of policies were ranked 'not included' in all five categories of the ideal framework. The majority of ratings within the extra-large population did not meet the ideal framework criteria.

Table 4.3: Large-Sized Cities Overall Findings

Large-Sized Cities Overall Findings					
Responsibilities and Parameters	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 12
1.1 Frequency of Appraisals	66.6%	16.6%	0%	16.6%	100%
1.2 Key Players Defined	66.6%	25%	0%	8.3%	100%
1.3 Pertinent Trainings for Managers Conducting Appraisals in Place	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
1.4 Defined Tasks Outlined	75%	16.6%	8.3%	0%	100%
Total:	77%	15%	2%	6%	100%
Planning and Expectation Setting	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 12
2.1 Define Goals and Objectives	75%	0%	16.6%	8.3%	100%
2.2 Self-Evaluation	91.6%	8.3%	0%	0%	100%

2.3 Continuous Process/Ongoing Informal Appraisals Throughout the Year	75%	25%	0%	0%	100%
Total:	81%	11%	6%	3%	100%
Measurement	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 12
3.1 Clear Assessment Mechanism	100%	0%	0%	0%	100
3.2 Measurable Rating System	100%	0%	0%	0%	100
3.3 Quality Measures in Place	100%	0%	0%	0%	100
Total:	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Communication	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 12
4.1 Delivery Mechanism Clear	91.6%	8.3%	0%	0%	100%
4.2 Feedback Forms (e.g. artifact, discussion)	91.6%	8.3%	0%	0%	100%
4.3 Post Appraisal Discussion	75%	25%	0%	0%	100%
Total:	86%	14%	0%	0%	100%
Action Plan in Place	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 12
5.1 Post-Evaluation Procedures in Place	75%	16.6%	8.3%	0%	100%
5.2 Action Plan and Follow-up	75%	25%	0%	0%	100%
Total:	75%	21%	4%	0%	100%

Based on the data provided above, it is apparent the majority of policies in the sample do not include the standards of the ideal framework. In fact, over 60% of the policies in the sample received ‘not included’ ratings across all standards. The measurement standard was not included in 100% of the samples. Over 80% of the policies did not include information on communication and planning/expectation setting. Furthermore, 0% of appraisals received a ‘well done’ ranking in action plan in place, communication, and measurement, with less than 10% ranked ‘well done’ in responsibilities/parameters and planning/expectation setting.

Overall, the large-sized city sample has poor performance appraisal policies posted in its employee handbooks, with limited information available to its employees. The policies were short, uninformative, and vague. The next section covers the findings of the medium-sized city sample.

Medium-Sized City Key Findings

Fourteen medium-sized cities appraisal policies were examined. The fourteen medium-sized cities include: Bedford, Bryan, Conroe, Duncanville, Friendswood, Harker Heights, Kyle, Lewisville, Missouri, Pearland, Rosenberg, Schertz, Temple, and Waxahachie. Only 14% of the cities have a performance appraisal policy posted. Over 80% of policies fell into the ‘not included’ ranking within five categories. 0% of policies received a ‘well done’ rating in the following categories: planning and expectation setting, measurement, communication, and action plan in place.

Table 4.4: Medium-Sized Cities Overall Findings

Medium-Sized Cities Overall Findings					
Responsibilities and Parameters	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N=14
1.1 Frequency of Appraisals	85.8%	7.1%	7.1%	0%	100
1.2 Key Players Defined	92.9%	0%	0%	7.1%	100
1.3 Pertinent Trainings for Managers Conducting Appraisals in Place	85.8%	7.1%	7.1%	0%	100
1.4 Defined Tasks Outlined	92.9%	0%	7.1%	0%	100
Total:	89%	4%	5%	2%	100%
Planning and Expectation Setting	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 14
2.1 Define Goals and Objectives	85.8%	7.1%	7.1%	0%	100%
2.2 Self-Evaluation	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
2.3 Continuous Process/Ongoing Informal Appraisals Throughout the Year	92.9%	7.1%	0%	0%	100%
Total:	93%	5%	2%	0%	100%
Measurement	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 14
3.1 Clear Assessment Mechanism	85.8%	14.2%	0%	0%	100%
3.2 Measurable Rating System	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
3.3 Quality Measures in Place	85.8%	14.2%	0%	0%	100%
Total:	90%	10%	0%	0%	100%
Communication	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 14
4.1 Delivery Mechanism Clear	92.9%	7.1%	0%	0%	100%
4.2 Feedback Forms (e.g. artifact, discussion)	92.9%	0%	7.1%	0%	100%
4.3 Post Appraisal Discussion	85.8%	7.1%	7.1%	0%	100%

Total:	90%	5%	5%	0%	100%
Action Plan in Place	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 14
5.1 Post-Evaluation Procedures in Place	92.9%	0%	7.1%	0%	100%
5.2 Action Plan and Follow-up	85.8%	7.1%	7.1%	0%	100%
Total:	89%	4%	7%	0%	100%

Similar to the other findings, over 80% of policies derived from the medium-sized population sample did not include the standards. Only 2% of the sample received a ‘well done’ rating in the responsibilities and parameters section. This is the only category any ‘well done’ is received for this sample. Overall, many cities are missing performance appraisal policies in the employee handbook and of the cities that do have an appraisal, it is lacking important information. The next section reviews our last sample, which includes small-sized populations.

Small-Sized City Key Findings

Twelve small-sized cities performance appraisal policies were sampled. The twelve small-sized cities include: Alton, Bellaire, Canyon, Dickinson, Gainesville, Highland Village, La Marque, Midlothian, Port Lavaca, Sachse, Stephenville, and Vernon. Of the twelve cities, only 33% have performance appraisal policies available. 0% of policies received a ‘well done’ rating in all five categories. The highest percentage of ratings fell into the ‘not included’ category with ‘insufficient’ as the second highest percentage.

Table 4.5: Small-Sized Cities Overall Findings

Small-Sized Cities Overall Findings					
Responsibilities and Parameters	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N=12
1.1 Frequency of Appraisals	66.7%	25%	8.3%	0%	100%
1.2 Key Players Defined	66.7%	25%	8.3%	0%	100%
1.3 Pertinent Trainings for Managers Conducting Appraisals in Place	83.3%	16.7%	0%	0%	100%
1.4 Defined Tasks Outlined	75%	16.7%	8.3%	0%	100%
Total:	72.9%	20.8%	6.3%	0.0%	100.0%
Planning and Expectation Setting	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N=12
2.1 Define Goals and Objectives	75%	16.7%	8.3%	0%	100%
2.2 Self-Evaluation	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
2.3 Continuous Process/Ongoing Informal Appraisals Throughout the Year	83.3%	16.7%	0%	0%	100%
Total:	86.1%	11.1%	2.8%	0.0%	100.0%
Measurement	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N=12
3.1 Clear Assessment Mechanism	83.3%	16.7%	0%	0%	100%
3.2 Measurable Rating System	91.2%	8.3%	0%	0%	100%
3.3 Quality Measures in Place	91.2%	0%	8.3%	0%	100%
Total:	88.9%	8.3%	2.8%	0.0%	100.0%
Communication	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 12

4.1 Delivery Mechanism Clear	66.7%	33.3%	0%	0%	100%
4.2 Feedback Forms (e.g. artifact, discussion)	91.2%	0%	8.3%	0%	100%
4.3 Post Appraisal Discussion	83.3%	8.3%	8.3%	0%	100%
Total:	80.6%	13.9%	5.6%	0.0%	100.0%
Action Plan in Place	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 12
5.1 Post-Evaluation Procedures in Place	83.3%	8.3%	8.3%	0%	100%
5.2 Action Plan and Follow-up	83.3%	8.3%	8.3%	0%	100%
Total:	83.3%	8.3%	8.3%	0.0%	100.0%

Similar to the medium-sized population sample, over 70% of this sample falls into the ‘not included’ category across the five categories. 0% of the policies fell into the ‘well done’ category and less than 10% of the samples fell into the ‘sufficient’ category. Based on the results, it is evident that the small-sized population’s policies do not line up with the standards in the ideal framework.

Summary

As the data shows, the overwhelming majority of cities do not meet the criteria in the ideal framework. Based on the percentages, one can conclude, the larger a city’s population, the more likely the city is to have a performance appraisal policy posted in its employee handbook. Although, larger populations tend to have a policy posted, the quality is not necessarily significantly higher than that of a smaller population. The next chapter discusses recommendations for improvement for the cities in Texas.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the best practices, provide recommendations for improvement, identify areas for future research, and to summarize the applied research project. The best practices section will include an example of the highest rated performance appraisal policy included in the sample. The recommendations for improvement section is derived from the data findings. The areas of future research are based off of a combination of the data findings and the gaps in research encountered during the research process.



Source:

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/7/7b/Seal_of_Houston%2C_Texas.svg/1200px-Seal_of_Houston%2C_Texas.svg.png

Best Practice Policy: Houston

The city of Houston was by far the highest ranked performance appraisal policy in the study. The policy received ‘well done’ ratings in every subcategory of responsibilities and parameters. The policy also received a ‘well done’ rating in ‘define goals and objectives’ and in ‘post-appraisal’ discussion. This policy received a ‘sufficient’ rating in the following

subcategories: continuous process/ongoing informal appraisals throughout the year, feedback form, post-evaluation procedures in place, and action plan/follow-up.

The policy is broken down by categories which include: authority, purpose, objectives, definitions, scope, and responsibilities. The subcategories provide specific explanation and information regarding the category. For example, under objectives the policy mentions regular communication – which is explained further with “quarterly or at least semi-annual as well as a final assessment.” This verbiage informs employees of how often regular communication should take place, whereas many other policies vaguely mention “ongoing communication” without a specific explanation of what this entails. The duties are outlined by a person’s role and presented clearly. This lets employees know who plays a role in the process, what the role is, and what is expected of them. Overall, the policy is purposeful, informative, and comprehensible.

- 1 AUTHORITY
 - 1.1 Chapter 14, Article II, Division 13, Section 14-162 of the Code of Ordinances.
- 2 PURPOSE
 - 2.1 To provide a consistent employee performance management process, the Houston Employee Assessment and Review (HEAR), for municipal employees that supports a culture of high performance by motivating, recognizing and developing employees to achieve objectives and goals on their performance plan aligned with City and departmental objectives and goals.
- 3 OBJECTIVES
 - 3.1 To support a culture of high performance facilitated by the HEAR process founded on the following core elements:
 - 3.1.1 SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely) employee performance goals aligned with the City's/department's/division's strategic goals;
 - 3.1.2 Assurance of fairness and objectivity through the training of supervisors and managers;
 - 3.1.3 Simple and short forms identifying the core goals and behaviors to be achieved;
 - 3.1.4 Regular communication with employees (quarterly or at least semi-annual updates) to recognize, motivate and/or provide opportunities to improve performance; and
 - 3.1.5 Growth and development opportunities.
- 4 DEFINITIONS
 - 4.1 Houston Employee Assessment and Review (HEAR) form - A form used to communicate to the employee his/her SMART performance goals/objectives and behavioral factors over a defined period of time that is used for both the reviews (quarterly or at least semi- annual) and the final assessment.
- 5 SCOPE
 - 5.1 All municipal employees shall have their performance assessed in accordance with this policy. Exceptions include department directors and executive level employees above pay grade 26 as well as part-time, seasonal and temporary employees. These exceptions may be assessed using the HEAR process at the discretion of the department director or Mayor. This policy shall not cover police officers or fire fighters covered under Chapter 143 of the Local Government Code of the State of Texas.
- 6 RESPONSIBILITIES
 - 6.1 Directors are responsible for:
 - 6.1.1 Ensuring that the management and supervisors of their department understand and incorporate the core elements of the HEAR process.
 - 6.1.2 Ensuring that the supervisors and managers have access to the Human Resources Department for training on how to prepare HEAR performance plans, provide ongoing communication with employees and complete assessments.
 - 6.2 Supervisors and managers will be responsible for:
 - 6.2.1 Learning and following the core elements of the HEAR process.
 - 6.2.2 Providing assessments on an annual basis or as scheduled. If the supervisor is not available, the supervisor's manager will complete the assessment.
 - 6.2.3 Communicating to the employee about expected performance goals/objectives, whether on a formal or informal basis.
 - 6.2.4 Ensuring that all finalized HEAR forms are received by the Human Resources Department for inclusion in the employee's official file.
 - 6.2.5 Ensure timely administration of HEAR process, which should be incorporated in the supervisor's and/or manager's performance assessment.
 - 6.3 Employees will be responsible for:
 - 6.3.1 Providing suggestions and having the willingness to discuss SMART goals/objectives and behavioral factors on the plan form with the intent to reach a mutual agreement;
 - 6.3.2 Providing input to supervisor or manager on achievements;
 - 6.3.3 Accepting feedback and follow-through on development and growth suggestions;
 - 6.3.4 Reviewing and signing the current year's HEAR plan as well as the final HEAR form.
 - 6.4 The Human Resources Department will be responsible for:
 - 6.4.1 Providing formats of the HEAR forms for both reviews and assessments.
 - 6.4.2 Providing training on "best practices" in developing and communicating the employee performance plans and evaluations, as well as providing ongoing feedback.
 - 6.4.3 Preparing an annual report to the Mayor reflecting departmental compliance with this policy.

Source: http://houstontx.gov/hr/e_relations/e_relations/AP3-20.html

Recommendations

Based on the data results, analysis, and my own observations, several recommendations need to implement to ensure an effective and informative performance appraisal policy is in place and available for employees to view at any time. Since many performance appraisal policies lacked the same information, encountered the same issues, and require the same changes, a summary of results and recommendations table was created. Based on findings, the table provides a summary of the results and lists specific recommendations that need to be made to the performance appraisal policies in the sample.

Summary of Results and Recommendations		
Standard	Summary of Results	Summary of Recommendations
1.Responsibilities and Parameters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.1 Frequency of Appraisals • 1.2 Key Players Defined • 1.3 Pertinent Trainings for Managers Conducting Appraisals in Place • 1.4 Defined Tasks Outlined 	77% of cities did not include the ‘responsibilities and parameters’ standard in the policy. Many policies did not identify key players, specific the number of appraisals per year, and did not mention pertinent trainings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the specific number of formal and informal appraisals conducted per year • Specify key players and the player’s roles in the process • Enforce performance management trainings for supervisors conducting the appraisal • Delegate specific tasks to key players
2.Self-Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.1 Define Goals and Objectives • 2.2 Self-Evaluation • 2.3 Continuous Process/Ongoing Informal Appraisals Throughout the Year 	84% of cities did not include the ‘self-evaluation’ standard in the policy. Goals and objectives were included in many appraisals; however, many did not identify the use of self-evaluation. Some policies mentioned a continuous process but did not include what this entails.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify the specific goals and objectives of the appraisal (in line with organization’s mission and department goals) • Include a self-evaluation which includes frequency, time-frame, and format • Enforce informal appraisals throughout the year (includes: frequency, time-frame, format)
3.Measurement	92% of cities did not include the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify assessment mechanism used

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.1 Clear Assessment Mechanism • 3.2 Measurable Rating System • 3.3 Quality Measures in Place 	<p>‘measurement’ standard in its policy. This standard held the least compliance throughout the sample. Most policies did not identify the assessment mechanism, the rating system, or mentioned quality measures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure raters are measurable and observable • Utilize a high-quality, research-based measurement tool
<p>4. Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.1 Delivery Mechanism Clear • 4.2 Feedback Form (e.g. artifact, discussion) • 4.3 Post Appraisal Discussion 	<p>85% of policies in the sample did not include the ‘communication’ standard. The delivery mechanism and feedback form was not identified or even mentioned in many policies. The post-appraisal discussion was mentioned briefly in some policies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include the form of communication used (e.g. conversation, online form, physical form) • Ensure employees are aware of the delivery mechanism being used • Enforce post-appraisal discussion between employee and manager to discuss findings and allow time for feedback/comments/questions
<p>5. Action Plan in Place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5.1 Post-Evaluation Procedures in Place • 5.2 Action Plan and Follow-up 	<p>80% of cities did not include an action plan in the appraisal policy. Many policies included an action plan, however the plan only indicated follow-up steps if employees received poor appraisal results and wanted to file a grievance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include post-appraisal processes (Ensure employees are aware of the process/steps and the process is accessible/user-friendly) • Include post-appraisal processes for every outcome (strong appraisal, poor appraisal, etc.)

Future Research

During the research process, it became evident that many gaps existed within the research.

Many sources pertaining to performance appraisals were selected and studied throughout the research process. Certain subjects within performance appraisals are easier to find in searches and the sources are more abundant. Some subjects that are difficult to find adequate sources on

are measurement, feedback artifact, and delivery mechanism. These areas are briefly mentioned in many sources; however, it is difficult to find sources devoted solely to these areas.

Summary

To recap, the applied research project is a content analysis conducted on performance appraisal policies listed in employee handbooks throughout the state of Texas. The sample includes a range from small to extra-large populations. The study begins with a literature review that uncovers the history of performance appraisals and the characteristics that make up an effective performance appraisal. Next, an ideal framework of the ideal components of a performance appraisal policy is presented and explained. Chapter three reviews the methodology used in the study, followed by chapter four which relays the results of the study. Lastly, the conclusion chapter wraps up the applied research project and presents recommendations for improvements.

Appendices

Appendix A: Overall City Findings by Standard

Overall City Findings					
Responsibilities and Parameters	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 44
1.1 Frequency of Appraisals	31	7	3	3	44
Total:	70%	16%	7%	7%	100%
1.2 Key Players Defined	32	7	2	3	44
Total:	73%	16%	4%	7%	100%
1.3 Pertinent Trainings for Managers Conducting Appraisals in Place	39	3	1	1	44
Total:	87%	7%	3%	3%	100%
1.4 Defined Tasks Outlined	34	6	3	1	44
Total:	77%	13%	7%	3%	100%
Planning and Expectation Setting	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N=44
2.1 Define Goals and Objectives	33	4	5	2	44
Total:	75%	9%	11%	5%	100%
2.2 Self-Evaluation	42	2	0	0	44
Total:	95%	5%	0%	0%	100%
2.3 Continuous Process/Ongoing Informal Appraisals Throughout the Year	36	7	1	0	44
Total:	82%	16%	2%	0%	100%
Measurement	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N=44

3.1 Clear Assessment Mechanism	39	5	0	0	44
Total:	89%	11%	0%	0%	100%
3.2 Measurable Rating System	42	2	0	0	44
Total:	95%	5%	0%	0%	100%
3.3 Quality Measures in Place	40	3	1	0	44
Total:	91%	7%	2%	0%	100%
Communication	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N=44
4.1 Delivery Mechanism Clear	37	7	0	0	44
Total:	84%	16%	0%	0%	100%
4.2 Feedback Forms (e.g. artifact, discussion)	39	2	3	0	44
Total:	88%	5%	7%	0%	100%
4.3 Post Appraisal Discussion	35	6	2	1	44
Total:	80%	13%	5%	2%	100%
Action Plan in Place	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N=44
5.1 Post-Evaluation Procedures in Place	35	4	5	0	44
Total:	80%	9%	11%	0%	100%
5.2 Action Plan and Follow-up	35	6	3	0	44
Total:	80%	13%	7%	0%	100%

Appendix B: Overall Extra-Large Sized City Findings by Standard

Extra Large-Sized Cities Overall Findings					
Responsibilities and Parameters	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 6
1.1 Frequency of Appraisals	3	1	1	1	6
Total:	50%	16.66%	16.66%	16.66%	100%
1.2 Key Players Defined	3	1	1	1	6
Total:	50%	16.66%	16.66%	16.66%	100%
1.3 Pertinent Trainings for Managers Conducting Appraisals in Place	5	0	0	1	6
Total:	84%	0%	0%	16%	100%
1.4 Defined Tasks Outlined	3	2	0	1	6
Total:	50%	33%	0%	17%	100%
Planning and Expectation Setting	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 6
2.1 Define Goals and Objectives	3	1	1	1	6
Total:	50%	16.66%	16.66%	16.66%	100%
2.2 Self-Evaluation	5	1	0	0	6
Total:	84%	16%	0%	0%	100%
2.3 Continuous Process/Ongoing Informal Appraisals Throughout the Year	4	1	1	0	6
Total:	67%	16.5%	16.5%	0%	100%
Measurement	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 6

3.1 Clear Assessment Mechanism	5	1	0	0	6
Total:	84%	16%	0%	0%	100%
3.2 Measurable Rating System	5	1	0	0	6
Total:	84%	16%	0%	0%	100%
3.3 Quality Measures in Place	4	1	0	0	6
Total:	84%	16%	0%	0%	100%
Communication	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 6
4.1 Delivery Mechanism Clear	5	1	0	0	6
Total:	84%	16%	0%	0%	100%
4.2 Feedback Forms (e.g. artifact, discussion)	4	1	1	0	6
Total:	67%	16.5%	16.5%	0%	100%
4.3 Post Appraisal Discussion	4	1	0	1	6
Total:	67%	16.5%	0%	16.5%	100%
Action Plan in Place	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 6
5.1 Post-Evaluation Procedures in Place	3	1	2	0	6
Total:	50%	17%	33%	0%	100%
5.2 Action Plan and Follow-up	4	1	1	0	6
Total:	67%	16.5%	16.5%	0%	100%

Appendix C: Overall Large Sized City Findings by Standard

Large-Sized Cities Overall Findings					
Responsibilities and Parameters	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 12
1.1 Frequency of Appraisals	8	2	0	2	12
Total:	66%	17%	0%	17%	100%
1.2 Key Players Defined	8	3	0	1	12
Total:	67%	25%	0%	8%	100%
1.3 Pertinent Trainings for Managers Conducting Appraisals in Place	12	0	0	0	12
Total:	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
1.4 Defined Tasks Outlined	9	2	1	0	12
Total:	75%	17%	8%	0%	100%
Planning and Expectation Setting	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 12
2.1 Define Goals and Objectives	9	0	2	1	12
Total:	75%	0%	17%	8%	100%
2.2 Self-Evaluation	11	1	0	0	12
Total:	92%	8%	0%	0%	100%
2.3 Continuous Process/Ongoing Informal Appraisals Throughout the Year	9	3	0	0	12
Total:	75%	15%	0%	0%	100%
Measurement	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 12

3.1 Clear Assessment Mechanism	12	0	0	0	12
Total:	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
3.2 Measurable Rating System	12	0	0	0	12
Total:	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
3.3 Quality Measures in Place	12	0	0	0	12
Total:	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Communication	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 12
4.1 Delivery Mechanism Clear	11	1	0	0	12
Total:	92%	8%	0%	0%	100%
4.2 Feedback Forms (e.g. artifact, discussion)	11	1	0	0	12
Total:	92%	8%	0%	0%	100%
4.3 Post Appraisal Discussion	9	3	0	0	12
Total:	75%	25%	0%	0%	100%
Action Plan in Place	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 12
5.1 Post-Evaluation Procedures in Place	9	2	1	0	12
Total:	75%	17%	8%	0%	100%
5.2 Action Plan and Follow-up	9	3	0	0	12
Total:	75%	25%	0%	0%	100%

Appendix D: Overall Medium-Sized City Findings by Standard

Medium-Sized Cities Overall Findings					
Responsibilities and Parameters	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N=14
1.1 Frequency of Appraisals	12	1	1	0	14
Total:	86%	7%	7%	0%	100%
1.2 Key Players Defined	13	0	0	1	14
Total:	93%	0%	0%	7%	100%
1.3 Pertinent Trainings for Managers Conducting Appraisals in Place	12	1	1	0	14
Total:	86%	7%	7%	0%	100%
1.4 Defined Tasks Outlined	13	0	1	0	14
Total:	94%	0%	7%	0%	100%
Planning and Expectation Setting	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 14
2.1 Define Goals and Objectives	12	1	1	0	14
Total:	86%	7%	7%	0	100%
2.2 Self-Evaluation	14	0	0	0	14
Total:	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
2.3 Continuous Process/Ongoing Informal Appraisals Throughout the Year	13	1	0	0	14
Total:	93%	7%	0%	0%	100%
Measurement	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 14

3.1 Clear Assessment Mechanism	12	2	0	0	14
Total:	86%	14%	0%	0%	100%
3.2 Measurable Rating System	14	0	0	0	14
Total:	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
3.3 Quality Measures in Place	12	2	0	0	14
Total:	86%	14%	0%	0%	100%
Communication	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 14
4.1 Delivery Mechanism Clear	13	1	0	0	14
Total:	93%	7%	0%	0%	100%
4.2 Feedback Forms (e.g. artifact, discussion)	13	0	1	0	14
Total:	93%	0%	7%	0%	100%
4.3 Post Appraisal Discussion	12	1	1	0	14
Total:	86%	7%	7%	0%	100%
Action Plan in Place	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 14
5.1 Post-Evaluation Procedures in Place	13	0	1	0	14
Total:	93%	0%	7%	0%	100%
5.2 Action Plan and Follow-up	12	1	1	0	
Total:	86%	7%	7%	0%	100%

Appendix E: Overall Small-Sized City Findings by Standard

Small-Sized Cities Overall Findings					
Responsibilities and Parameters	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N=12
1.1 Frequency of Appraisals	8	3	1	0	12
Total:	67%	25%	8%	0%	100%
1.2 Key Players Defined	8	3	1		12
Total:	67%	25%	8%	0%	100%
1.3 Pertinent Trainings for Managers Conducting Appraisals in Place	10	2	0	0	12
Total:	83%	17%	0%	0%	100%
1.4 Defined Tasks Outlined	9	2	1	0	12
Total:	75%	17%	8%	0%	100%
Planning and Expectation Setting	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N=12
2.1 Define Goals and Objectives	9	2	1	0	12
Total:	75%	17%	8%	0%	100%
2.2 Self-Evaluation	12	0	0	0	12
Total:	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
2.3 Continuous Process/Ongoing Informal Appraisals Throughout the Year	10	2	0	0	12
Total:	83%	17%	0%	0%	100%
Measurement	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N=12

3.1 Clear Assessment Mechanism	10	2	0	0	12
Total:	83%	17%	0%	0%	100%
3.2 Measurable Rating System	11	1	0	0	12
Total:	92%	8%	0%	0%	100%
3.3 Quality Measures in Place	11	0	1	0	12
Total:	92%	0%	8%	0%	100%
Communication	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 12
4.1 Delivery Mechanism Clear	8	4	0	0	12
Total:	67%	33%	0%	0%	100%
4.2 Feedback Forms (e.g. artifact, discussion)	11	0	1	0	12
Total:	92%	0%	8%	0%	100%
4.3 Post Appraisal Discussion	10	1	1	0	12
Total:	83%	9%	8%	0%	100%
Action Plan in Place	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done	Total Percentage N= 12
5.1 Post-Evaluation Procedures in Place	10	1	1	0	12
Total:	83%	9%	8%	0%	100%
5.2 Action Plan and Follow-up	10	1	1	0	12
Total:	83%	9%	8%	0%	100%

Appendix F: Coding Sheet

Table 3.1: Coding Sheet				
Title: Performance Appraisal Policy in cities across the state of Texas: An Ideal Framework and Assessment of Performance Appraisal Policy				
Purpose: The purpose of this research is to describe performance appraisals and to assess performance appraisal policies and processes set in cities throughout the state of Texas.				
Descriptive Category			Coding Category:	
City:				
Responsibilities and Parameters	0	1	2	3
V1: Frequency of Appraisals	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done
V2: Key Players Defined	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done
V3: Pertinent Training for Managers Conducting Appraisals in Place	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done
V4: Defined Tasks Outlined	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done

Planning and Expectation Setting	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done
V5: Define Goals and Objectives	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done
V6: Self-Evaluation	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done
V7: Continuous Process/Ongoing Informal Appraisals throughout the year	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done
Measurement	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done
V8: Clear Assessment Mechanism	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done
V9: Measurable Rating System	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done
V10: Quality Measures in Place	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done

Communication	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done
V11: Delivery Mechanism Clear	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done
V12: Feedback Form (eg: artifact, discussion)	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done
V13: Post-Appraisal Discussion	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done
Action Plan in Place	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done
V14: Post-Evaluation Procedures in Place	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done
V15: Action Plan and Follow up	Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done

Levels of Alignment

Not Included	Insufficient	Sufficient	Well Done
Not in document	Item is briefly mentioned in document	Item is included in document and thoroughly discussed	Item is mentioned in document, thoroughly discussed and is clear and comprehensible

Appendix F: Technique/Method Definition

Below are the technique/method/ definitions retrieved from: <http://www.ijesi.org/> - Public *Personnel Performance Appraisal System (PPAS)*

Approaches/Techniques:

Easy appraisal method: The assessor writes brief essay providing assessment of the strengths, weaknesses and potential of the subject. In order to do so objectively, it is necessary that the assessor knows the subject well and should have interacted with them. Since the length and contents of the essay vary between assessors, essay ratings are difficult to compare.

Graphic rating scale: A graphic scale „assesses a person on the quality of his or her work (average, above average, outstanding or unsatisfactory) “. Assessment could also be trait centered and covers observable traits, such as reliability, adaptability, communication skills, etc. Although graphic scales deem simplistic in construction, they have application in a wide variety of job responsibilities and are more consistent and reliable in comparison with essay appraisal technique.

Field review method: Since individual assessors differ in their standards, they inadvertently introduce bias in their ratings. To everyone this assessor-related bias, easy and graphic rating techniques can be combined in a systematic review process. In the field review method, a member of the HRM staff meets a small group of assessor from the supervisor units to discuss each rating, systematically identifying areas of inter-assessor disagreement. It can then be a mechanism to help each assessor to perceive the standards uniformly and thus match the other assessor. Although field review assessment is considered valid and reliable, it is very time consuming.

Forced-choice rating method: Unlike the field review method, the forced choice rating method does not involve discussion with supervisors, although this technique has several limitations. The most common method is to force the assessors to choose the best and worst fit statements from a group of statements. These statements are weighted or scored in advance to assess the employee. The scores or weights assigned to the individual statements are not revealed to the assessor so that she or he cannot favor any individual. In this way, the assessor bias is largely eliminated and comparable standards of performance evolved for an objective. However, this technique is of little value whenever performance appraisal interviews are conducted.

Critical incident appraisal method: In this method, a supervisor describes critical incidents, giving details of both positive and negative behavior of the employee. These are then discussed with the employee. The discussion focuses on actual behavior rather than on traits. While this technique is well suited for performance review interviews, it has its drawback that the supervisor has to note down the critical incidents as and when they occur. That may be impractical, and may delay feedback to employees. It makes little sense to wait six months or a year to discuss a misdeed, a mistake or good display initiative.

Management by objectives: The employees are asked to set or help set their own performance goals. This avoids the feeling among employees that they are being judged by unfairly high standards. This method is currently widely used, but not always in its true spirit. Even though the employees are consulted, in many cases management ends up by imposing its standards and objectives. In some cases, employees may not like „self-direction or authority“. To avoid such problems, the work standard approach is used.

Work standard approach: In this technique, management established the goals openly and set targets against realistic output standards. These standards are incorporated into the organizational performance appraisal system. Thus, each employee has a clear understanding of their duties and knows well what is expected of them. Performance appraisal and interview comments are related to these duties. This makes the appraisal process objective and more accurate. However, it is difficult to compare individual ratings because standards for work may differ from job to job and from employee to employee. This limitation can be overcome by some form of ranking using pooled judgment.

Ranking Methods:

Alteration ranking method: The individual with the best performance is chosen as the ideal employee. Other employees are then ranked against this employee in descending order of comparative performance on a scale of best to worst performance. The alteration method usually involves rating by more than one assessor. The ranks assigned by each assessor are then averaged and a relative ranking of each member in the group is determined. While this is a simple method, it is impractical for large groups. In addition, there may be wide variations in ability between ranks for different positions.

Paired comparison: The paired comparison method systematizes ranking and enables better comparison among individuals to be rated. Every individual in the group is compared with all others in the group. The evaluations received by each person in the group are counted and turned into percentage scores. The scores provide a fair idea as to how each individual in the group is judged by the assessor.

Person-to-person rating: In the person-to-person rating, the names of the actual individuals known to all the assessors are used as a series of standards. These standards may be defined as lowest, low, middle, high and highest performances. Individual employees in the group are then compared with the individuals used as the standards, and rated for a standard where they match the best. The advantage of this rating scale is that the standards are concrete and are in terms of real individuals. The disadvantage is that the standards set by different assessors may not be consistent. Each assessor constructs their own person-to-person scale which makes comparison of different ratings difficult.

Checklist method: The assessor is furnished with a checklist of pre-scaled descriptions of behavior, which are then used to evaluate the personnel being rated (Monga, 1983). The scale values of the behavior item are unknown to the assessor, who has to check as many items as she

or he believes describe the worker being assessed. A final rating is obtained by averaging the scale values of the items that have been marked.

Behaviorally anchored rating scales (BARS): This is a relatively new technique. It consists of sets of behavioral statements describing good or bad performance with respect to important qualities. These qualities may refer to inter-personal relationships, planning and organizing abilities, adaptability and reliability. These statements are developed from critical incidents collected both from the assessor and the subject.

Assessment centers: This technique is used to predict future performance of employees were they to be promoted. The individuals whose potential is to be assessed has to work on individual as well as group assignments similar to those they would be required to handle were they promoted. The judgment of observers is pooled and paired comparison or alternation ranking helps in making an order-of-merit ranking for each employee. It also involves subjective judgment by observers. A performance appraisal system could be designed based on intuition, self-analysis, personality traits, behavioral methods and results based techniques. Different approaches and techniques could be blended, depending on the goals of performance appraisal in the organization and the type of review. For example, management by objectives, goal-setting and work standard methods are effective for objective coaching, counseling and motivational purposes. Critical incident appraisal is best suited when supervisor's personal assessment and criticism are essential. A carefully developed and validated forced choice rating can provide valuable analysis of the individual when considering possible promotion to supervisory positions. Combined graphic and essay form is simple, effective in identifying training and development needs, and facilitates other management decisions.

Appendix G: Performance Rating Definitions

Below are the performance rating definitions retrieved from the *International Journal of Governance and Development*.

Leniency: This error arises when ratings for employees are generally at the high end of the scale regardless of actual performance of employees. This is usually the case whenever such appraisals are linked to important decisions such as compensation or promotion.

Halo Effect: The rater allows a rating on one dimension (or an overall impression) to influence the rating, he or she assigns to other dimensions for that employee.

Central Tendency: This is when some raters are reluctant to give either high or low ratings, preferring to see everyone as average performer.

Horns Effect: Here, the employee is rated low on all functions regardless of his actual performance.

Recency Effect: This error occurs when the rater bases his rating on the employee's recent behavior that he or she can easily recall (Thayer, 1998).

Appendix H: Overview of Human Resource Business Functions

Human Resources is an umbrella term that refers to the overall management of employees and resources within an organization. ³More recently, the term has been narrowed down to human capital, which is defined as “The collective knowledge, skills and abilities of an organization’s employees (Human Resources Institute of New Zealand, 2015).” The major areas within human resource include: recruiting and staffing, compensation and benefits, training and development, labor and employee relations, and organizational development.

According to the *Human Resources Institute of New Zealand* and the *Business*

Dictionary, the areas that make up human resources can be defined as follows:

Recruiting and Staffing: “The process of bringing into an organization personnel who will possess the appropriate education, qualifications, skills and experience for the post offered.”⁴

Compensation and Benefits: “Sum of direct benefits (such as salary, allowances, bonus, commission) and indirect benefits (such as insurance, pension plans, vacations) that an employee receives from an employer.”

Training and Development: “A process dealing primarily with transferring or obtaining knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to carry out a specific activity or task.”

Labor and Employee Relations: “A broad term used to refer to the general management and planning of activities related to developing, maintaining, and improving employee relationships by communicating with employees, processing grievances/disputes, etc.”

Organizational Development: “Theory and practice of planned, systematic change in the attitudes, beliefs, and values of the employees through creation and reinforcement of long-term training programs. OD is action oriented. It starts with a careful organization-wide analysis of the current situation and of the future requirements, and employs techniques of behavioral sciences such as behavior modeling, sensitivity training, and transactional analysis. Its objective is to enable

³ For more information on human resources, please visit: <https://www.shrm.org>

⁴ For more information on recruiting and staffing, please visit:

the organization in adopting-better to the fast-changing external environment of new markets, regulations, and technologies.”

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