

Original Research Article

Performance Appraisal System and Job Satisfaction among Nurses in Al Dakhiliya Governorate in Oman: Preliminary Findings

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Abstract: Introduction: Over the past decades, performance appraisal has been a part of the process of guiding and managing career development in the health care sectors. The feedback of performance appraisal may leave a great impact and satisfaction on employee and evaluators. However, there is little known about the effect of performance appraisal on improving the job satisfaction among nurses in Oman. Therefore, the aim of this study was to explore the relationship between performance appraisal and job satisfaction among nurses in Al Dakhliyah Governorate, Oman. **Methods:** the study used an explorative descriptive cross-sectional design using stratified random sampling of 309 nurses assigned in the 29 government healthcare institutions in Al Dakhliyah Governorate. A self-developed Performance Appraisal Questionnaire was used for data collection. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used to analyze and interpret the data. **Results:** the findings showed that more than 60% of the respondents believed that the reason to conduct performance appraisal was only to evaluate performance of employees without considering other factors such as job satisfaction, promotion, and motivation. Majority of respondent agreed that performance appraisal helps achieve meaningful career goals and promotes constructive criticism in a friendly and positive environment (70% and 67% respectively). In addition, many of the participants (69%) revealed that their work performance improved after the formal process of performance appraisal and 68% of them believed that performance appraisal would improve their job satisfaction and motivate them to perform their duties sincerely. **Conclusion:** Performance appraisal is a crucial aspect in human resource management that can directly affect the job satisfaction of nurses. Policy-decision makers in the Ministry of Health can develop clear guidelines and policies regarding performance appraisal, as well as strategies that improve job satisfaction among nurses. It is recommended that further studies are conducted to explore deeply the factors that can affect the performance appraisal and job satisfaction among nurses in Oman.

Keywords: Performance appraisal, job satisfaction, nurses.

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INTRODUCTION

Performance appraisal and job satisfaction are two major factors of influence on quality of care. These factors have become a critical issue for healthcare institutions, particularly among nurses (Farquharson *et al.*, 2012). Good performance appraisal can have a

positive impact on the job satisfaction; thus, it can influence the quality of care provided to patients. On the other hand, low performance appraisal can lead to job dissatisfaction and may cause higher staff turnover, work overload and low quality of patient care. It may result in many negative consequences for the health services such

as financial burdens and poor outcomes (Wells, Manuel & Cuning, 2011).

Performance appraisal is defined as all the systematic procedures and processes to assess and evaluate individual employee performance and productivity (Ahmad and Shahzad, 2011; Joseph, 2014; Singh & Rana, 2015). Job satisfaction is defined by Locke (1976) as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of someone on higher position.” The rapid advancement and changes in the healthcare service have increased the demands for competent nurses, which further highlights the importance for healthcare institutions to provide conducive working environment as well as keep their employees happy and satisfied (Almaqbal, 2015).

In 2013, a group of researchers conducted a study that focused on the impact of performance appraisal on employee’s performance and also analyzed whether motivation affects the relationship of performance appraisal and employees’ performance (Iqbal *et al.*, 2013). The findings revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between performance appraisal and employees’ performance. It was revealed that motivation positively affected the relationship between performance appraisal and employee’s performance.

Al-Ahmadi (2009), a Saudi Arabian researcher, found that job performance is positively correlated with organizational commitment, job satisfaction and personal/professional variables. Both job satisfaction and organizational commitment are strong predictors of nurses’ performance. Job performance is positively related to some personal factors, including years of experience, nationality, gender, and marital status; whereas, level of education is negatively related to performance. In 2016, the findings of the Abed and EL Banan (2016) study showed that there was a significant correlation between nurse’s perception of the performance appraisal process, reaction to performance appraisal system and their job satisfaction.

There is a scarcity of studies regarding the relationship of performance appraisal and job satisfaction in Oman. To the best of the authors’ knowledge, only one previous study has documented this relationship. Almaqbal (2015) conducted a study to measure the job satisfaction of nurses working at a regional hospital in Oman and determine the factors that most significantly influence this satisfaction. The researcher found that the participants had a moderate level of job satisfaction (overall mean score for satisfaction was 3.49). In addition, the findings suggested that job satisfaction of nurses in Oman was affected by two main factors: opportunities for professional growth and extrinsic rewards. Therefore, addressing these two factors effectively may help improve the quality of nursing care. In addition, despite the fact that the Oman

Ministry of Health (MOH) has recently issued new guidelines to improve the salary and promotion opportunities of nurses, the researcher recommended that the Ministry of Health can implement new policies to prevent staff turnover and promote nurses’ job satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive cross-sectional study method was used in this study using stratified random sampling of 309 nurses assigned in the 29 government healthcare institutions in Al Dakhliyah Governorate. All registered full-time nurses with one or more years of experience and who could speak, read and write English fluently were included in the study. The survey used for data collection was self-developed by the researchers and consisted of four sections; socio-demographic, specific information about performance appraisal, general information about performance appraisal and job satisfaction. Copies of the survey were given to five expert nurses with different specialties for the verification of validity. Different measurement scales were used in different sections such as (yes/no), multiple choice and five-points Likert scale (ranged from 1: strongly disagree to 5: strongly agree). All instruments were administered in English. For determining the sample size, a power analysis, based on a medium effect size of 0.50, a two tailed P - value of ≤ 0.05 and a power of 0.80, was conducted.

Data collection process started by requesting the heads of nursing departments and nurses-in-charge to help disseminate necessary information of the survey to all staff nurses working at the targeted healthcare institutions. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 20) was used to analyze the data through descriptive statistics (mean & frequency distribution) for the demographic data, performance appraisal and job satisfaction. The inferential statistics (Chi Square & Pearson correlation) will be discussed in details in another paper.

Ethical approval was obtained through the Research and Ethical Review and Approval Committee at the Ministry of Health represented by the Directorate General of Health Services of Al Dakhliyah Governorate. Informed consent was obtained from the participants after explaining the purpose of the study. The participation was voluntary and the participants were informed that they had the right to leave the study at any time without penalties. All questionnaires for the data collection were kept in a locked cupboard or in the computer with a password.

RESULTS

The survey tool has revealed that out of 309 respondents, a vast majority of them were females (93%), aged between 31 and 35 years (48%); and they were married (91%). In addition, the majority of them

(77%) had obtained at least a diploma in nursing, while 23% of the respondents had a Bachelor degree in nursing. Around 63% of nurses who filled the questionnaire are currently working in primary healthcare centers and 37% of them in secondary healthcare institutions. The study results illustrated that majority of these nurses work in

the accident and emergency department (17 %) at their respective healthcare institutions while the least number of nurse respondents came from the surgical department (5.5%). The results demonstrated that nearly two third of the participants (63%) had 11-20 years of working experience in nursing profession.

Table 1: Demographic Information of study Respondents

Demographic Data	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Female	286	92.6
Male	23	7.4
Age		
25 -30 yrs	40	12.9
31-35 yrs	149	48.2
36 - 40yrs	85	27.5
41-45yrs	35	11.3
Marital Status		
single	25	8.1
married	281	90.9
divorced	2	0.6
Educational Qualifications		
Diploma in Nursing	237	76.7
BSN	71	23.0
Type of health care facility (HCF)		
Primary HCF	195	63.1
Secondary HCF	114	36.9
The Working department		
Medical	39	12.6
Surgical	17	5.5
Maternity	19	6.1
A&E	53	17.2
Paediatric	45	14.6
Others	136	44.0
Years of Experience		
1-5yrs	27	8.7
6-10yrs	63	20.4
11-20yrs	194	62.8
above 20yrs	25	8.1

The results depicted that more than 60% of the respondents believed that the reason to conduct performance appraisal was only to evaluate performance of employees without considering other factors such as job satisfaction, promotion, and motivation. This result was aided with what 78% of respondents claimed about not receiving any increment or bonus during their nursing career. On the contrary, more than 70% of the nurse respondents stated that performance appraisal helps achieve meaningful career goals. Majority of the respondents (67%) also agreed that performance appraisal promotes constructive criticism in a friendly and positive environment. Additionally, many of the participants (69%) revealed that their work performance improved after the formal process of performance

appraisal and 68% of them believed that performance appraisal would improve their job satisfaction and motivate them to perform their duties sincerely.

Interestingly, about 60% of respondents claimed that there is partiality in performance appraisals through the top management level and 30% stated that performance appraisals did not help them in bringing about any changes in behavior. In line with previous results, 40% of nurses stated that motivation was closely related to performance appraisal system in their respective organizations, while 30% stated it was related to organizational culture; 20% believed it was related to retention of employees, and only 11% of them said that it was related to the recruitment system.

Table 2: Effect of performance appraisal on the following statements

	Statements	Yes (%)	No (%)
1.	Performance Appraisal is used for evaluation of Employees	60	40
2.	Do you receive any increment (bonus) in your salary after performance Appraisal?	22	78
3.	Do you think performance appraisal helps people set and achieve meaningful goals?	70	30
4.	Do you think performance appraisal give constructive criticism in a friendly and positive manner?	67	33
5.	Do you think that performance of employees improves after formal process of performance appraisal?	69	31
6.	Do you think performance appraisal improves motivation and job Satisfaction?	68	32
7.	Is the top level management partial in Performance Appraisal?	60	40
8.	Do you think performance appraisal helps to change behaviour of Employees?	70	30
9.	Performance Appraisal system of your organization is related to motivation.	40	60

On a Likert scale that comprised of the following elements (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree), almost half (49%) of the participants agreed that performance appraisal system was needed in organizations, whereas 20% had neutral response to the same question. Only 14% of nurses disagreed that performance appraisal helps win co-operation and teamwork and 42% agreed that performance appraisal helps reduce grievance among the employees.

When asked about their opinion on performance appraisal improving personnel skills, more than half of the respondents (51%) agreed that it did. Almost an equal percentage of nurses stated that training programs in their organizations boosted individual and organizational development. With regard to performance appraisal, only

(54%) of the participants stated that it was done periodically in their places of work and 55% of them stated that it helped them in identifying their strengths and weaknesses. Majority of participants (57%) agreed that performance ratings were helpful for the management to provide employee counseling. About 29% of nurses; however, stated that promotions were not purely based on performance appraisals and almost half of them said that salaries were not affected by performance ratings and neither were increments (32%). Around 33% of respondents agreed that staff transfer, demotion, suspension, and dismissal are based on performance appraisal. Most nurses (43%) agreed that their organizations achieved their targets through performance appraisal. Detailed inferential statistical analysis will be discussed in another paper.

Table 3: General information about performance appraisal

	Statements	Agree	Disagree
1.	Performance appraisal system is needed in organization	49 %	51%
2.	The performance appraisal helps to win co-operation and team work.	86%	14%
3.	The performance appraisal is helpful in reducing grievance among the employees.	48%	42%
4.	The performance appraisal is helpful for improving personnel skill	51%	49%
5.	Training programmers are effective for individual and organization development.	50%	50%
6.	The performance ratings were done periodically	54%	46%
7.	The performance appraisal system helps to identify the strength and weakness of the employee.	55%	45%
8.	The performance rating is helpful for the management to provide employee counseling.	57%	43%
9.	Promotion is purely based on performance appraisal.	71%	29%
10.	Management fixes salary through the performance rating	50%	50%
11.	Performance rating helps to fix increment	68%	32%
12.	Transfer, demotion, suspension and dismissal is based on performance appraisal	33%	67%
13.	The desired target of the organization is achieved through the performance appraisal.	43%	47%

DISCUSSION

Nurses play a crucial role in providing high quality care for patients. Therefore, performance appraisal and job satisfaction have become critical issues for healthcare institutions, especially for nurses due to the global shortage of nursing workforce and the cost of high quality of care. There is scarcity of studies addressing performance appraisal and job satisfaction among nurses in Oman and; thus, the aim of this study was to explore the relationship between performance

appraisal and job satisfaction among nurses in Al Dakhliyah Governorate, Oman.

The findings of this study revealed that the majority of the participants believed that having a formal process of performance appraisal improved their work performance, job satisfaction and motivation (Iqbal et al., 2013). These results were consistent with the findings of Almaqbali (2015), Al-Ahmadi (2009), and Abed & El Banan (2016). In addition, majority of the participants agreed on the significance of the

performance appraisal on improving clinical skills, in helping identify the strengths and weaknesses, and helping the management to provide employee counseling. However, 60% of the participants felt that there is still some kind of partiality on the part of the top managers in the performance appraisal process. This could be due to the differences in personalities or lack of training on the correct methods of using the tool of performance appraisal.

Some participants stated that promotion, salary and increments are not affected by the performance appraisal; therefore, their behavior did not change. Most of the healthcare institutions in Oman are government institutions and the process of promotion for all workers in the public sectors follows specific criteria. In 2022, Oman started using a rewarding system (Ejada) that is based on the performance of the workers in achieving their duty - related objectives. It is expected that this system will play a major role in improving the government services as well as enhancing the job satisfaction among the workers.

CONCLUSION

Policy-decision makers in the Ministry of Health can develop clear guidelines and policies regarding performance appraisal, as well as strategies that improve job satisfaction among nurses. These include providing professional opportunities and extrinsic rewards. It is recommended that further studies are conducted to explore deeply the factors that can affect the performance appraisal and job satisfaction among nurses in Oman.

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