

Integration of the Rational, Political and Justice Models of Performance Appraisals: The case of the Sri Lankan Public Sector

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Abstract

In recent times there have been urgent calls for reforms in the public sector, and thereby certain private sector management techniques have been advocated to be implemented in the public sector. Special emphasis has been placed on performance management and thereby performance appraisals in this regard. However, research and observation show that performance appraisals have failed in their duty in both the private sector and the public sector in their design as well as their implementation. Performance appraisals literature speaks of three models, namely, the rational, political and justice models. However, they have been researched in isolation and conclusions drawn thereof. Such isolation has been identified to limit the ability to capture the socio political nature of performance appraisals within the public sector. The conceptualization presented in this research attempts, therefore, to combine the rational, political and justice models of performance appraisals and extend the current knowledge of performance appraisals. Thereby, a qualitative approach was adopted based on the post positivist philosophy when conducting the research. In-depth interviews were used for data collection using two public sector organizations in Sri Lanka, and thematic analysis was conducted with the use of the NVivo 8 software. The findings of this research study indicate the need for clear identification and articulation of the purposes of a performance appraisal for it to be effective, and also that user interpretation and manipulation has an impact on the relationship between the due process of performance appraisal and the purposes of performance appraisals. It further elaborates the need for the appraisal process to be designed with the end in mind or rather a retrogressive or backward-looking approach to be adopted. It has also paved the way to create an extension to the conceptual model originally proposed.

Keywords: Due-process of performance appraisals, User interpretation, User manipulation, Purposes of performance appraisals, Social Rule System Theory.

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